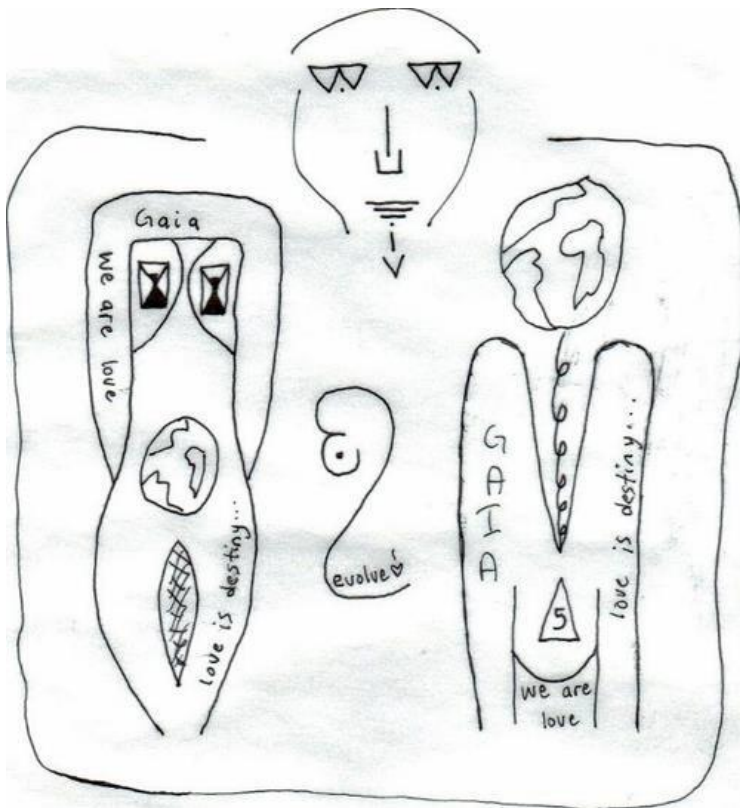


*Feet of Thine
Own Soul*



Zisa Aziza

Feet Of Thine Own Soul



Truth is my Compass, & Wisdom is my Helm

once you know, you cannot unknow. once
you have seen, you can never unsee. once
you have allowed yourself to feel, you are
freed from silence; for the submergence of
one's truth only births havoc within the self.

Zisa Aziza

Negress of Saturn's Deeds

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Bus Stop, 2007

It's a sunny day in Staten Island
A place I have never felt at home

I am in Port Richmond waiting for the S40 bus
I am wearing baggy clothing and a mohawk

Time wasn't a matter of my concern
Until three preadolescent Black boys approached me

Two were on bikes, one on foot
They began to throw glass bottles within feet of me

I was 18 years old and felt fear rushing through me
They began to inquire about my gender and why I was
present

I took in a deep breath and rejected the notion of harm
I began to address their lack of understanding with
humor

For the kid who was chubby, I asked if he'd care for fat
jokes
By a girl he fancied, he promptly stated that would be
unkind

I then asked why would my queer essence be demeaned
Why did they approach with such angst and
intimidation?

They admitted to being confused and wary if I were a
boy or a girl
I told these young boys, I am a person who deserves to
feel safe

As they deserve to be loved and protected
They had dismounted from their bikes, all were
standing

We began to speak about school and learning and
dreams

By the time I looked up, my bus had arrived

These young men asked when I'd return
I smiled and asked that they stay safe

Ignorance is a contagion and love is an antidote
I sat happily upon that bus, heart rushing

Knowing that encounter could have been such a tragedy
But spirit loves alchemy

Ohr

I've been in the wilderness with spiritual illness
Chose to pour out the wine because I mean business

I put the blunt down for the Torah
Light me up like a menorah

I am davening within my being's temple
May all the healing my soul requires come forth to
assemble

My nightmare is to live by the leash of fear
HaShem, you know I ain't fit to be cavalier

May I be born anew every Shabbat
May the ritual leave no residual

Mitzvot obliged like it be habitual

Paradigm Shift

My psyche, I begin to sift
This life, a gracious gift

Democracy, a beautiful ideal
Oppression a persistent ordeal

Participation aligned with the desired change
Is a matter of intentional energy exchange

Passivity and indifference, an agency illness
I seek purpose in my stillness

I reap the benefits of this precarious nation
From my life's station, I seek elevation

Solo Dolo the flow gon' be slow
As a collective, much we can sow

I meditate on why I hesitate
Undeniably, I have faith in my fate

The destination is an ethereal location
Of spiritual affirmation and collective innovation

'Negress of Saturn, the chronology is mythology!'
As I ground my being, I pray for ceaseless constancy

Insurrection of White Supremacy

I consented to my incarnation, however
For Amerikka, I have no allegiance to this rotten nation

Grateful for Medicaid and section-8 housing
For liberation, my spirit stay browsing

As the world turns, I bear witness
Starseed, on a journey for celestial fitness

I don't see my blue-skinned dreadlocked avatar
In a quartz crystal, the truth, I assure you is bizarre

Self-care is Self-preservation
I'm getting free from this slave plantation

Not through a school or an occupation
But by devotion to divine creation

The static is enticing, but do you have vision?
Division is a decision, spiritual collision

May healing, of all forms, reign supreme
As we uncover the scheme of this regime

Cocooning

I cavort in the uncertainty
And find comfort in its instability

It is attachment that causes suffering
To myself, resolve is proffering

I am an ocean's wave
Unapologetically brave

Nurturing and discerning
And yet, the yearning is burning

I am learning—this is concerning!
The empathic kin of the narcissistic

My pursuit of love must be holistic
The past is not inherently deterministic

But like yin and yang, matters can be dualistic
I seek a path that will be shamanistic

In my being, I desire to embody energies that are
synergistic
As the protagonist of my divine narrative

I live in verse—I suspect lyricism will be curative
To the Universe, *'let's break this curse!'*

Lunar Speak

Sobriety and all this energy it generate
Past and present, I choose to integrate

My purpose, I seek to consolidate
Eros, I's committed to sublimate

I sense prana rising like a tsunami
Surfing, as I ready with my inner army

From trauma, I seek to become a deportee
Dharma, I ain't no escapee

Word to me,
I's my own appointee

Rectifying my ideology
Within me, I marry genealogy with cosmology

Starseed walking the earth
Remembering thy own worth

My lazy eye became the third
I's the shepherd of my own herd

The cycles, I ain't fit to perpetuate
My vibration I calibrate, no need to speculate

When you ready for the fruit
You plant the seed, your soul be the root

From My Little Girl To Yours

There are scenes in my mind that are incomplete
The somatic memories, I cannot delete

At age 5, I knew I was not safe
I am 31, and still feel unsafe

*I see you, little girl
And all of your innocence*

*I celebrate you, and pray--
That you are not defile*

*In your presence,
I experience flashback*

*I recall the days of living
Outside of my body*

*Each day, I strive to settle within my being
But the sight of you...*

*Please, I celebrate you from a distance
For I am triggered by my memories*

The images and sensations are not concrete
Trauma has been a generous feast—sorrow's treat

For at least a decade, the violations were on repeat
Deja vu, no matter who I meet

This pain, I must unseat
My healing is not discrete

From my psyche this pain must excrete
My heart will no longer be offbeat

“Remember This”

Mutuality isn't equality,
It is equity

We give from where we are full
Appreciate the bounty folk share— do not pull

Accept with care!
Abundance, is inevitably fair

Affirmation

The path is not linear; it is divergent
Your soul's purpose is emergent

This ain't a sprint, but a marathon
In the journey, you swim in the oxymoron

Restorative practices are essential;
Wisdom is experiential, embrace your potential

Prevail

I am a smokeless flame,
Transmuting destruction into creation

My divine mission, I now claim!
With veneration, I embrace my initiation

Chosen Ones

I am the moon in my own sky,
And you are a star reflecting the inner light we magnify

Upon dawn, I relish your presence in my life;
It is not yet dusk, but I'd happily be your friend in the
afterlife

Body of Being

The crackling of knees
Limbs move, much unease

Thirty and arthritic
Is trauma parasitic?

Neurodivergent and differently-abled
Where do I find love tabled?

Oblivious to my own self-worth
Self-mastery, a matter I must birth

I am my own beloved, within I scroll
This heart of mine, no longer will it toll

Black Love (Pain)

African father and Black mother
To both, I was an other

I's out here chasing black love with wounds in my heart
There are bonds I will never know, my perception stay
distort

Revelation: The heart has tiers!
Managing my expectations, to reduce tears

I be stalking friendship, as though I'd lose my breath
My fractured foundation felt like death

Frequency is key, vibration ain't hyperbole
I prefer consistency to idiosyncrasy

I's letting go, letting fate sow
May the divine put on a good show

Super Power

I have resurrected like the sun
Love has me spun

I dance with the moon
For my heart is attune

Pillow Talk

I have tasted many a woman
(Even thrusted a few men)

I have flogged and humped
My vulva, sure has been pumped

Many, a fine specimen of feminine delicacy,
However, I am now sworn to celibacy

Because the flutter of spiritual intimacy,
For me, is unknown

I desire to share my throne

Honestly, never have I ever made love!
Around my heart, there is a sacred glove

To be gently peeled off by a magician
With whom I can share my intuition

I don't seek to become wet
I crave that which is unmet

I want to feel my soul pulsate
With a being with whom I can create

For ourselves, we shall chart a celestial fate
And as a Union, we are destined to elevate

Epiphanic

Love is relative;
Mutuality, imperative

I love as deep as the ocean floor
And as wide as the sky can soar

I love as though I were Venus personified
My yearning for my tribe is fortified

But like the star whose galaxy is unknown
Some folk are no longer homegrown

Either we unearth the crystals from earth's mantle
Or admit that there is much we ain't fit to dismantle

I refuse to play with topsoil and fly a kite
For my crown, that would be a blight, for which I could
not delight

For all the teachers who have come and gone
For you, I burn a candle light upon dawn

As living dynamite, I honor my internal satellite

Unbound

I love you so hard from a distance
But I unravel amidst our coexistence

I died a thousand deaths in Lagos!
Your pride, your wounds, not my playoff

I am eternally grateful that you did not abort me
But in my psyche you scattered your own debris

I am renovating my soul to become whole
I am recognizing my locus of control

Mama, I will always love you
But it is alchemy that I must pursue

In 2020, I say goodbye to you

Rising Tide

87 days sober, I felt cleaned;
Slippery slope for the blunt fiend

I am powerless to the fade
My spirit, comfortable in the shade

But no matter how dark the night
I will always seek the light

The pause in the fog, the clarity of the mind
A matter I wish to enshrine

I can no longer hide from my destiny
From my history I cannot be an escapee

On this night of the Cancer Full moon
My blood is immune, and I swoon

The karma of past lives, the future of lives to come
The kundalini rising up from my sacrum

In my heart, I beat a drum
Summoning my ancestors with a hum

I am a living offering
I no longer choose suffering

Bless me, Spirit; for I have arrived
To wisdom revived

Mary Jane

Reflecting upon the irony and the insane
The flower, no matter the strain

Fight or flight, I had to get on that plane
At age 8, to my Catholic School Principal,

I delivered ma's weed like bread wholegrain
It was love I sought to attain

Mother, my heart she gripped like a chain
Had to make a break, prison of my soul

My being, everyone sought to control

24th birthday, Grandma rang my phone
To her ear, my voice was unknown

While in the shelter, in the midst of celebration
She could identify my ganja intoxication

The call was brief, grandma never did like the flower
In the projects, she could smell it every hour.

2013, that was the last time I heard her voice
Addiction, I once rejoiced; now I contemplate choice

I ain't cried that hard since '97
I pray I meet her in the 5th dimension, or heaven

For my body, I've settled to treat trauma with self-
medication

But my spirit is now in litigation; I plead for an
invocation

I love the herb, but its hold on me is type perturb
Love is a verb, get me off addiction's curb!

Numbing the wound prolongs its destruction
2020, the appeal has lost its seduction

Indiscretion

*How am I complicit in my own oppression?
I require a psychoemotional secession*

*To fulfill the procession to ascension
No longer shall I collude in self-repression*

Jah

Zion is a state of consciousness
I swim with vigor within my subconsciousness

Uncovering the wealth of spiritual grace
My liberation is a matter I need not chase

For YHWH sustains my essence
And generously bestows a holy effervescence

Baby, Oh Baby

*I forgive you for not seeing the mirror,
Your historical journey has become clearer*

*You were the bosom to untold lies;
Life's teachers sought to chastise*

*But you are the sweetness of the bees;
To your destiny, you hold the keys*

Unemphatic

*I was breastfed shame
The self-hate was mine to blame*

*7-year-old runaway from the projects
Middle of the night, seeking better prospects*

*Met a clown who gave me half my genes
Promised me the set of Lion king like the movie scenes*

*But I was miscast in Lagos, on the set of Cinderella
When it pours, give me an umbrella*

*Jane, the stepmother, I'll never forget her cooking
When them beans hit the floor, I was just looking*

*From the filth, she demanded I scoop my meal
The degradation was unreal
Her tongue, a machete aimed at my jugular vein
My spirit she sought to detain*

*10-year-old me contemplating suicide
Incapable of justifiable homicide*

*1/3 of my life had been in captivity
My psyche was inundated with radioactivity*

*Claimed but neglected
Protection is what I expected*

*Never had a glass slipper
To my hair they took the clipper*

Black girls are magic
The fear we evoke is tragic

*The memories are somatic
I am symptomatic*

*Posttraumatic
But homeostatic*

Womb Bearer

You were not my protector
An aggressive deflector

That crack addicted apology for a man
Was chosen over me— I, your first kin

In therapy, you said: “I don’t want a faggot for a
daughter—
And you wanted it!”

My 14-year-old homeless self
Still sits with the memories:

Of sleeping on the floors of strangers
Who I met at the Gay Center

Of conflating survival for purpose;
Lust for love and belonging

Of being a white woman's hayride
'Cristen, I thought I was safe in that group home!'

*When you are famished for touch
The molestation feels like kindness*

Devotion

*Within me, I bear a well
The waters of my spirit swell*

*I shall fetch from within,
And wear love's grin*

Soul Wound

*I am rootless
but not fruitless*

*my heart is a seed
seeking its meed*

*ready to be planted
but the veins are slanted*

*arrhythmia and palpitations
crooked and misaligned circulations*

*is there soil for my soul?
the climate is not of my control*

*I am aching to harvest the crop of love
sunshine, bless me from above*

Supplication

Healing to heal
Because I can feel

This is no simple ordeal
I see beyond the veil

Words written in braille
This hurting, I seek to curtail

Flashbacks like a thousand papercuts
Denial and disassociation struts

Down the runway of my mind, as I assume the fetal
position;
In my heart, I daven to become a magician

Abracadabra, *may it be undone*
Turn my pain into none

Marked

*My little girl is soiled
I have ritualized many wakes for her passing*

*But she resurrects like leaves do in the spring;
I have mourned her, and I have celebrated her*

*For she is the anchor to my ship bound at sea
In waters polluted, and yet I can see*

*My little girl is the honeybee suckling from life's tree
She will always be a part of me*

*And like the seasons that come and go
Her pain, I will always know*

Recovery

Don't confuse a gas station stop for your destination
A little fuel to get you on the road, not your salvation

*Calorie or salary, this don't define me
Power dynamics and thermodynamics*

The structure is rather hierarchal, feeling patriarchal
Different character same role, feasting on control

Shaking my head, it's the clients I am here for
Office politics be a bed sore

Hands up, sipping from my cu

Full Bloom

I'd rather share my heart than my body,
For the pursuit of romance has been shoddy

I seek that which is sacred before erotic
Because lust has proven to be fibrotic

Flowering Tribe

I's sitting here with this trauma
Like baby, who ya mama?

I's a whole woman in this world
Wounded and unfurled

I ain't fit to be picking at these scabs
The elixr for transformation, my heart grabs

Because a dirty wound can become a rotted limb
And amputate sleeves of the soul, I dare to swim

In waters dim and grim
This work is love's gym

My capacity for empathy and humility
Is predicated upon the skill of vulnerability

Overwhelmed by faith, I am on my knees
I have grown fond of love; Adonai, you do not tease

The act of loving is a gift unto itself – I am blessed
I love me, I chose to acquiesce; Now, I attest

The pursuit of joy is a fundamental impetus for alchemy
I stand in community with divinity, for which I have an
affinity

***Although seeking help evokes feelings of
vulnerability, it also confers
the possibility for immense resilience.***

God of our Mothers

Adonai, I do not understand!
Abraham had several wives:
Hagar for the Muslims
Mary for the Christians
Sarah for the Jews

*I am a whole Negress
And I am confused*

*If Judaism is the Mother
Of the Abrahamic Religions
And the Black Woman
The Mother of Civilization
Who can tell me I ain't a Jew???*

Is this a matter of hue???

*I am crawling out of this fallacious cavern
Within my psyche; Tag—Elohim, you got me!*

*My God LOVES me!
No person of Clergy
Can tell me otherwise!
Misfed with lies, my spirit cries
And still—I RISE!*

***Although I am at the inception of my Jewish
conversion, I will remain in the 18th hour, as I intend
to blossom like a spiritual flower. In a garden that
was severed from lineage and heritage due to
enslavement and colonization. The distortion of my
spiritual legacy will be rectified through edification.***

Discomfort With Truth

2012 was a year of reckoning
Spirit and trauma were in conversation
I took the best notes I could
And could not properly translate
My mind's krump dance with the ineffable

I spent four years in denial
Mind sick is still sick
I'd happily take iron for anemia
An albuterol inhaler for asthma
Hydrocortisone for eczema

But an antipsychotic for psychosis?!
I was like, 'Hold-up now!
Whatchu mean I'm mentally ill?
Take that back to the pharmacy!
Keep your prescriptions and them two cents!'

2016, I got caught up with AOT
A court mandate to comply with medication
At the risk of forced institutionalization
I was on psychiatric probation
18 months, monthly injection

Four years filled with wonder have passed
But at that time, I lived off of \$196 in monthly Food
Stamps
And \$59.50 bi-weekly in cash assistance
Struggled in a 5 month Peer Advocacy Training Program
And managed 6 months in an internship

2020 came and a Negress stay blessed
Life was looking real sideways

But medication doesn't just save lives
It preserves one's quality of life
For which I bear testimony

The mind is vastly delicate
And life, immensely precious
I misused four years of my life, while in denial
I cannot retrieve those years
Nor can I undo the trauma of hospitalization

I ask HaShem for her forgiveness
For my blindness to the path laid before me
But I am grateful that she has bestowed me with her
grace
Stigma is an ugly and dangerous disease of
consciousness
May I free myself every day from the impact of such

***Truthfully, I conflated the intensity of a desired
intimate relationship for the multiplicity of
polyamory. I simply care for a divine flame with
whom I can share a cup of tea, and within whose
heart I can swim like love's sea.***

As I settle into the present, I obsess less on the destination because this instant of edification is so sacred. How could I not be content and overjoyed to be alive? Even in the hurting, I find the expanse of the human heart. May I always seek to transmute the seeds of pain into the fruits of ecstasy.

*If spirit were a body of water,
I am floating in a lake of love.*

*The next woman to enter my bakery
will eat air before she tastes a grain of sweetness.*

Spirit, I's Hardheaded

I offered her my heart, to which she stated: expectations
would be exhausting
She don't want my cake, just my frosting

Let's be friends, "you my tribe!"
After ghosting me for a week, I don't subscribe

Exactly eight weeks of courting
Her frequency and essence, she was purporting

Gullible, am I
She was a lie

Sadly, I suspended my celibacy
Spirit, how did I not foresee?!

She insisted upon fidelity
Shaking my head, where's the parity

This Black love journey,
Somebody get me a gurney

She a whole descendant of Marcus Garvey
What do I fail to see as love's devotee

I'm tired of going through the motions
Lust, I no longer wish to swim in your oceans

The impulse to tend to the heart of another
I will redirect to love me unlike my own mother

Spirit, I surrender myself to chastity;
Henceforth, I shall conserve my vitality

Because I crave a soul union,
A divine communion

Nothing less, shall I settle for
As I patiently wait at love's shore

That Good Pain

Every day, I grow more sane
Not even the moon's wane
Can properly explain
That which my spirit seeks to attain

I am letting go.
Letting spirit sow the seeds
Of a world bond by greater deeds

For love breeds a frequency
That precedes self-integration and revelation

Spirit loves me. I love me. I am in love.

As I sit with this love, I reflect upon how I am situated within systemic structures of exclusionary white supremacy, intersectional oppression, and white terrorism. Although the year is 2020, the exclusionary stance of the suffragist movement in 1920 permeates

our intellectual communities. Transwomen are to feminism what the Black and Indigenous woman were and have been: significant by circumstance through a politically commodified humanity. How does Blackness and Trans Lives become codified into a politically correct, liberal, woke fad: while we continue to die? And those breathing, finding their ancestral wounds deeply activated.

I suppose it is simple. A multi-century house built upon global trafficking, slavery, pedophilia, rape, white supremacist terrorism, legislated dehumanization and the police sanctioned genocide is like dated milk. Eventually, it curdles. This nation has been fermenting, the most we can harvest is spiritual awe. The present feels like a national stumble. But truly, the American pie must crumble. As the citizenry of this nation, it is our duty to embrace the death and transformation of this contentious nation. And because *privilege and oppression are not mutually exclusive*, we all have much to shed and to draw within. Comfort blinds us to the realms of true freedom. I encourage us to create landscapes within the terrains of our imagination that are so vivid, we are compelled to seek manifestation.

I commit myself to a practice of revolution in reflection, meditation, and self-care. I pray for grace when letting the death of mental constructs be properly mourned, which introduces me to a more liberal and whole being. And for me, that is the greatest threat to this white supremacist capitalist terroristic nation. I dream so deeply of frolicking in seas of melanin, where death is not the threat, and I – not a menace through white eyes. I pray that day is on the rise, whether my breath will be present or otherwise.

I see race, and I feel energy;
Some folk I embrace, the others I show grace.

A Lady...

Some folk want a woman they call a dime
Nickels and pennies ain't my paradigm

I want a pound of gold, a sack of diamonds
The sea's jewel, and the moon's gem

My woman can have my heart to hem

Main Dish, Single Serving

I got no day ones. Just ones to the end.
In spirit's den, we fit to win.
Spirit let me have your ear for a second;
It's just you and I here.

The journey, I endear; however,
I's hella skeptical of love's sphere.
Been chasing a rush, just being sincere.
But I met me a shorty who is mad hearty.

She got thickness with kindness.
I don't lost my blindness.

I knew I was famished, but got damn is she an entree.
To my heart she is a protégé, together shall we slay.
A partner in creation, intensifying sophistication.
We frolic with the spirit of our ancestors when we
commune.

During Corona, we met in June. In proximity, we shared
a monsoon.
From our internal river, we met at a confluence, both
ready to deliver

At the thought of her, I shiver. She could have all my
babies, but not my last name. I must exclaim. She is a
descendant of Marcus Garvey, her lineage I acclaim.
Faith in love, I reclaim. I await our next tryst, may desire
persist.

***It is unwise to equate the frequency of contact with
depth of intimacy; for the potency of love is a
spiritual currency not manifested in clock rotations,
but in the vulnerability of the soul.***

What you do not own, will own you. The notion that trauma is taboo is a spiritual flu. For the wound is where the healing comes through; a matter we ought to pursue.

***Loving Black women is an act of self-love; active self-preservation and revolutionary from on above—
healing and wholeness, thereof.***

Predicament

The destination sought, at what cost?
If I don't know where I am going,
how the fuck can I get lost? I have
been a hoarder of people; not my tribe,
just a collection. I desire connection of
similar complexion. Upon retrospection,
I required deeper introspection. Mommy
and Daddy rejection became a deflection.
Spirit offered an interjection, my energy
necessitates protection. Heart and mind
uncrossed. Truth I shall exhaust; never am I lost.

Seeking

I yearn for a tribe of co-creators,
divinely attuned curators.

Of high expression
and spiritual confession.

Gathered communally
for this society's finale.

Black Womanhood

Essence is essence, first and foremost.
But the wounded wound, when one
fails to compost. At the intersection of
white supremacy and patriarchy, the
rainbow shades of black women can be
found. Any alliance is a gift and a risk,
the nuances are profound. Never feeling
safe is a matter upon which I cannot expound.
My heart unbound, and yet this is my battleground.

***I am the third of my bloodline, and the only to reach
delivery. My path was conferred,
a sea-woman in this world's divine fishery.***

Tread

I am mourning the undead. Crack and
a Greencard, the cause for which I was bred.
Spiraling like DNA that I must unthread. My origins,
I will strip and shed. All of the work of Spirit, by
which I am fed. I welcome the watershed, and the
fire within that shall spread. Gently, into the light, I
tread.

Nearing

I am lovingly learning to love
without expectation. I am watering
my soul like a flower in the divine
garden of the Universe. I trust that
my seeds will bear ripe fruit. In community,
I will share the harvest of my journey.
This is an invitation for joyous patience;
As I dream myself into a state of wholeness.

*Although I wish to center Blackness in my life, this
does not mean that the many White folk whom I love
would be lost to strife; however, my self-love
permeates my worldview, which requires mirroring
in my chosen family– this I cannot eschew.*

Last Ditch

My effort was not in vain
I sought amends upon this plane

You can't rationalize with the insane
My dignity, I must retain

Joy is my chosen domain
From toxicity, I shall abstain

The past is profane
The present, I shall ordain

My faith, no one can detain
For truth, I shall sustain

***I will no longer submit to spiritual violence, that
which is enacted by parentage;
I choose to disown such a heritage.***

The Situation

spiritual orphan
psychological abortion
energetic distortion
emotional contortion

relinquishing comparison
gratitude is medicine
embracing the divine feminine
I am my own specimen

***“They who brim with narcissism, will only bombard
you with criticism; release your fate
from their self-hate.”***

“High-Spirited”

Intergenerational trauma feels like a coffin I carry
within my heart; the inherited valves that pump blood,
from which I cannot depart.

When you realize the apology was disingenuous and the
indignation has only fortified your resignation;
accepting that your commitment to edification does not
require a family reunification.

Grateful to know that closure bequeaths composure.

***The criminalization of poverty is necessitated by a
carceral capitalist structure dependent upon a
sustained underclass. Systemic disparities are not a
coincidence, and blaming the victim is sociopathic.
The world is coming apart at the seams, exposing
modern-day slavery and all its schemes.***

The Amerikkkan Dream as a Halfsie

My father and grandfather
Found a bootstrap in the Black woman's womb.

Pull up, climb, and soar—they did!
I descend from a lineage of single and abandoned Black
mothers

From Africa to South America. These men flew.
They knew the plight of colonization and mastered
female subjugation.

And these Black mother's learned to internalize their
hegemonic defeat.
Believing, still, that they were the exceptional Black—a
Candace Owens supporter, at that!

I am dislodged in the territories of a psychological slave
plantation that has not been dismantled. I am a
descendant of the diaspora, in my blood three
continents merge; as I seek a sphere to call home, where
spirit and truth converge.

I am not content with my origins. Although I have
forgiven, memory haunts me. I know that within
capitalism, greed is our creed. And yet, I hear the
laments of my unborn descendants, inquiring why I
held steadfast to the chains that bind me?

I cry with tears only spirit can discern;
For Global Emancipation is my utmost concern.

Between Queer Jews

I was walking towards The High Bridge, in Washington Heights around sunset, when I received her call. A woman whom I met on Hinge back in December of 2019. After a single date, we decided to be friends. This was before she disclosed that she hadn't ever dated a Black woman. Upon this day, June 5th 2020, she video called me via WhatsApp. She seemed enraged, rather activated. I'll call her Eve. Eve resides near Grand Army Plaza, a place that has been a site of protest for several days, due to police brutality and the death of George Floyd. During this video call, she disclosed that upon opening the car door, of whom she thought was her cannabis dealer, she was met with much hostility by an unsuspecting Black man. This Black man was not her cannabis dealer, and he vocalized much of his disdain for her whiteness and its intrusiveness. On the call, she appeared to be seeking my Black consolation. This was after she had called her white social worker girlfriend, who told her that it sounded as though Eve was inconvenienced. As this call went on, and I patiently listened to her verbalize her discomfort with how she was engaged by this Black man, and how she condemned the protests. Unwittingly, she began to reveal her covert racism.

Eve said, and I paraphrase, "I don't know why he approached me with such anger. I didn't do anything but open his car door. I thought he was my dealer. He told me to suck his dick. I told him it was most likely small, and that I don't suck dick." She went on to say, "I love Black people and Black culture. I know more about Black history than that Black man. This makes me feel so uncomfortable." I generously gave her my space and

time to unload. As the conversation continued, she said,

“I don’t see color!” When I tried to help her contextualize her anger, she began to tell me that she did not choose to be born into white privilege. Eve happens to be the daughter of two doctors; a person who earns upwards of \$150,000 with only a Bachelor’s degree, at the age of thirty-one. As the conversation labored, I felt that she wanted me to sympathize for her.

She stated, “As a Queer Sicilian Jew, who works in predominantly white male spaces, I could be a whole lot further if I were a white man.” My jaw dropped. I was having an encounter with her white fragility. I was experiencing a multitude of microaggressions. During this same conversation, she tried to compare the trope of White Jews, with that of Black Americans. I declared, ‘We are not having this conversation.’ This was met with, “I just don’t like that everything is so tense, and we often discuss race. Why is this so uncomfortable, now?”

I awoke the next day, with a great heaviness in my spirit. That morning, I texted her: *‘I hope you inform yourself....because I am not able to hold space for your white rage.’* Eve responded: *“What? I’m just waking up, ma.”* I then said: *‘I was triggered by our conversation.*

Too much. I worry I am considered your token Black friend. I had a close white Jew friend before, and the same shit; white supremacy and money. It’s painful. And this is a raw time.’ Eve retorted: *“You are far from my only Black friend. I’m sorry I triggered you.”* *‘I’ll need space to recover,’* I stated. Eve’s last words were: *“This is a raw time. I am sorry. I care deeply about you Zisa, and I hope you have a wonderful Shabbat.”* Her words held about two ounces in a forty ounce bottle. She cares about me and loves my culture, but the Black male body is still a

landscape she enacts her white body supremacy over.
So what does that *love* really mean?

White supremacy can no longer be coddled by this
Negress. It does not serve me. The connections to white
women do not afford me financial compensation, or
even true intimacy between friends. I have been a
glorified Mammy to these heifers. I own it! I was going
along, to get along. But how does that serve my Black
Liberation? It was a visceral realization that her white
supremacy was fully embodied. I could see how the
disease of racism was encased in black cultural
appropriation. Suddenly, it was clear; her collection of
Black “friends” would assuage her whiteness as
something palatable in the face of undeniable anti-
blackness. My ancestors, those of the Lost Tribes, who
were captured, enslaved, bred and lynched, would have
my head for such an affiliation! I pray to Elohim for
their forgiveness. The blindness endured as a product of
assimilation has been spiritually vicious. I seek
repentance! May I have the sight and the will to divorce
myself from the abusive relationship inherit with
whiteness, in the colonies of this slave plantation called
Earth!

Ashe, HaShem

“Fuck respectability politics, I ain’t cooning for the white lunatics. Comforting whiteness ain’t my circus trick. This real life, not some “massa please” flick.”

The Tenth

1820 to 2020

Negro can’t keep a penny

“All Lives Matter”

As the rich get fatter

The ghetto and its gentrification

The systemic formation

To this nation

I divest my affiliation

As I dream in melanin,

The pursuit of Black Salvation is my medicine

PWI

I am resenting all the white spaces
Inhabited, like crooked braces

My mouth full of lies
Born of dreams in white skies

Assimilation has me drunk
My Blackness shrunk

Integration has not served my race
Legislated white supremacy, a disgrace

Black unification is a just case
Our humanity no longer viable to debase

Internalized anti-blackness, I see you in the mirror
Truth become clearer, as my spirit comes nearer

Colonization is a virus, like Covid-19
Some it kills, others, stuck in between

I rebuke my participation in my own annihilation
No explanation, committed to Black co-creation

Emancipation on Juneteenth is a longing
My Blackness seeks belonging

Letting go of the white gaze
Upon Black love, shall I graze

Me and My Inner Coon

Am I a dark-skinned house Negress,
Or a blessed multifaceted empress?

The sliding scale of oppression!
Withholding judgment, my confession

As the looting and burning ensues
I can only wear my own shoes

How do you tell the denigrated
The ways their rage ought to be curated?

The mechanisms of an insurrection
Are born of perpetual abjection

Although I believe in the weaponization of education,
I respect the fight against subjugation

Revolution

The heat in this nation broke democracy's thermostat.
There's more than one way to skin a cat. I ain't fit to be a
diplomat. But we gots to get to work in this habitat.

When property is more valued than Black lives,
insurrection is the language of the oppressor; the
innumerable disparities in Amerikkka would be the
systemic aggressor. Death to white nationalism, the
spiritual stressor.

Revolution gonna have a stroke, if we ain't woke.

All skinfolk ain't kinfolk.

***On the truth may we toke? I ain't misspoke, white
supremacy is smoke.***

Together shall we uncloak a nation that is broke?"

When It Hit (6/1/20)

I feel transported between times
Locked and caged through paradigms

2020, New York City
This country, demonic and witty

Slave uprisings and lynch mobs
My ancestors and I choke with sobs

This nation bred my race!
An apology I cannot trace!

Nat Turner, Harriet Tumban, Ida B Wells
The pursuit of justice dwells

My spirit has no allegiance to this white supremacist
nation
Amerikkka and its being is deserving of a cremation

My blood won't spill, but if you're Black
You ought to be armed for a counterattack

Spirit is a weapon, but so is a gun
Self-defense, let it not be misdone

Decolonization is the revolution
This evolution will be retribution

Four Centuries

1619 to 2020

Murder has been plenty

Whiteness is cannibalistic
Its supremacy is mechanistic

Amerikkka, the last iteration;
Black liberation is salvation

“Black bodies will never be protected by a white supremacist nation; for this nation continues to source its exploitative labor force from the descendants of our captured and enslaved ancestors. A Black exodus merits much thought, as we ask the benefactors of slavery for more than 3/5 of our humanity.

How does Black liberation serve a carceral capitalist economy?”

The Great Return

Amid Corona and Riots
Space X has been launched

Slave patrol, now Police Force
Setting the climate for Martial Law

Truthfully, I have no desire to protest
For my spirit requires rest

Africa is beckoning our return
As whiteness escapes to outer space

We need an exodus out of Captivity
Blackness is facing extermination

Worldwide, we of the diaspora need to rise
Into free teach-ins and legal resources

Our allies ought to support our independence
Lend your white privilege through subsidized
collaboration

I don't want to burn this white nation down;
With your whiteness, I want to return Africa to
undeniable greatness

Why does China get to buy up Africa?
Are we not worthy of our motherland's wealth?!

If Jews could find a home in Israel
Blackness should make way back to Africa

Let us burn this nation down by looting the Ivory Tower
Federal loans will be our reparations, collect and
bounce

We should till the earth and heal our souls
Permitting whiteness to be flushed from our psyches

Our spiritual emancipation requires creative stratagem
May we exemplify the truth that faith trumps fear?

Let us be architects of a liberated imagination
Forward, we go—together

***“Sometimes a return to the wound necessitates a
shedding of dead skin; Forgiveness is closure to the
past, and an opening to what has yet to come.”***

The Cosmic Fight

From Biafra to Jim Crow, the War on Drugs is genocidal
Poverty, a generational plateau

All my blood knows is to be hunted
Spirit no longer stunted

Shotgun in a tongue
The heart has sung

*It's a white man's car
On a Black Earth*

Me no know what fit be
All I know, is what I see

Every war dabbles in Black genocide
White Supremacist homicide cannot be justified

Naija, my home, how bitter sweet
Stop and Frisk on these streets

*Searching for coins in denims
Former chattel, now a piggybank*

Colonization diced up territories like jigsaw nations
Gentrification rendering folk of color to displaced
locations

I am realizing that our salvation
Will not be decreed by this white nation

Economic Liberation and Spiritual Emancipation
Is self –actualization through our own education

*Folk, we got to do it for the Culture
Whiteness is a spiritual vulture*

‘Not my carcass, not this body
My spirit is gaudy’

Light so bright can’t fear the night
We shall gather with sight

And defy this plight!

***“I am grateful for the antipsychotic; a spiritual
antibiotic.”***

A Prayer

Dear Yahweh,

You are great, and this generational trauma need not be our fate. I ask that you deliver whiteness from the pit of evil and terrorism. I ask that you empower Black people to define their future for themselves: *intellectually, economically, politically, and spiritually*. I ask that as an imperialist nation, both former colony and present neo-colonizer, that THE PEOPLE rise up collectively to heal the systemic and institutionalized oppression and exploitation that has become pervasive in this nation's history. I plead that love become the guiding force for our collective evolution; for I have no spoons to engage in vibrations not aligned with my spirit. May we transmute what does not serve us as a species upon this blessed Earth.

Amen.

I Know

Not all in Blue
Hold a White Supremacist view

But those who do
Are not few

This system of the punitive Carceral State
Has never been great, for it is rich in hate

I ask you, simple and in Blue
What do you deem to be true?

As our Amerika endures a vicious cancer
Embodied by you; I await your answer

This spiritual virus, our police state
Is an incremental annihilation, increasing in rate

You, in Blue—It is not too late
To abolish what our government chooses to create

Like slaveholders, vowed against emancipation;
This ain't a new situation, just a new generation

The facts are up for examination
Your compensation for incarceration

Does not exclude you from spiritual repudiation
I don't care the legislation legitimizing your
participation

You, in Blue, are killing this nation
The enforcer of legal implementation

This Amerikan Corporation necessitates your
complicity;
I plead that you withdraw your free will from the
toxicity

No matter how Blue, we all bleed red
This regime, we must shed

***“An umbrella is not my sky, and shrinking myself is a
tactic I must modify; for the sun is the source of life,
and I will be a blazing fire until I return to the
afterlife.”***

Negress Chronicles of a Spiritual Rebirth (2013)

A Kundalini Awakening

10am January 9th 2012

I awoke and the world was different. Of course, it was I who perceived the world differently. I felt rooted in a hypnotic state of quandary. I reached for my crystal sack and drank water from a Klean Kanteen bottle. I saw a pocket knife and flickered with my bic lighter. In trance like movement, I felt a dialogue occurring within my soul and mind, but a higher self was present—my spirit. I felt the embodiment of an old African woman and the personification of water. I began to shout: ‘Agape [love], motherfucker’. In a span of about twenty minutes, I found myself eager to speak with the sun. I broke a glass jar and cut my skin. Not out of suicidal ideation, but a desire to articulate that I was not scared of death, nor the sight of my own blood. As my blood began to drip, I drew fire toward it. I then made my way to the window and broke it. I cannot recall the exact instance of breaking the window. One moment I was sitting up on the bed and the next, I was kneeling on a table by the window with my head and shoulders all the way out.

It was about 10:00am when I began my impromptu discussion with the sun and the air. I spat out a shell and cursed at, what felt like, very evil energy. I felt the pains of racism, sexism and ecological destruction, but not as a human. I felt like a plant speaking with a fish about the idiocy of man. And I also felt like a wise African woman bellowing many lives of agony. About four cops were pulling me out of the second floor window-frame, when I felt myself thinking in Latin words. I was feeling weird word combinations in English. Christian references were

scrambling in my mind. Idioms felt like clues that I needed to decode or contextualize.

Open Sesame
have sex with me

Spell your name [i felt illiterate and vulnerable. I imagined myself signing symbols of a language I did not understand.]
ama ee ama ah-ee ah; ah-ia [this came to me as a correction of something done in error or undone]

In the name of the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit. Amen;
In the name of the sun, the moon and the Holy Spirit. I surrender.

This is a little of what I remember. By the time the cops had me in their grip, “Amen” meant “I surrender.” I believe this was my initiation. The moment in which I was existing interdimensionally and consciously accepting the task of death and rebirth.

I was asked if I knew my name and where I was. I started to snap out of it. I was taken away in the ambulance. My blood sugar was tested. A photo was taken. I then imagined myself performing art with a lover around the world. It felt like a premonition, the way dreams later feel like déjà vu in waking life. I felt like Peter Pan and Tinker Bell would be a Pied Piper couple.

Once I reached the ER, Eden’s Medical Center, I was, regrettably, given a tetanus shot and an Ativan pill. I swallowed the curved square copper pendant that I had found on Thanksgiving day, on a sidewalk. I felt myself dying and being birthed. I felt myself feeling as small and complex

as a single cell. I thought Earth to be a body amongst greater planetary civilizations, star systems, galaxies and throughout the universe. I felt myself become conscious of myself in ways no language has afforded sufficient description. After spending the night in the psych-ward at John George's Pavilion, I was released the following afternoon. I was given a Bart Card and had on a gray sweatshirt, sweatpants and a pair of socks.

I rode the train carrying a brown bag that contained my clothes and I had picked up a wooden stick. Life felt like a dream, and I, a waking ghost. I got off at Lake Merritt Station and walked to 24th street and Telegraph. I wrapped my bloodied shirt around the stick and dipped it into Lake Merritt. It felt right. I reached the site where it all began. I had been residing at a woman's place. I met her on OkCupid and took some nude photos of her. She was leaving town for three weeks and let me crash her crib. She was due to return on the 12th of January. At the time, I was so engulfed in my experience that I hadn't realized I performed property damage, which could result in legal and financial penalties. By the time I tried to reenter the building, I saw on people's faces what a nut they had seen the day prior. As per usual, I was more fascinated than embarrassed. I felt life all around me and from centuries past to centuries into the future. I felt like an atom floating in an incubator.

I felt like the story of Jesus was more about ego-death and spiritual rebirth. I began to identify with some of the christian teachings I had been force-fed as a child. I waited in front of the building and sat like an Indian, as my catholic school teachers would say. I just watched the masses pass me by. I smiled. I was gleeful. Three friends came and joined me for chatter and to share the view. I also had an older

black male with locs and a shopping cart of bottles walk over towards me. He was an alcoholic in recovery. We had a conversation about his twin children and abandoning them. We spoke about stuff from either another life or an alternate dimension. Whatever it may have been, we very much understood each other. I identified him as my father, and he reciprocated the notion. In the space and time we shared, we became a bubble of dimensional unity. I cherished that man.

Truth poureth light where water has grown still.

I was later let in to retrieve my belongings, which had already been packed for me. I was taken aback, but also remembered that what may have been exhilarating and confusing for me, would have been pure schizo for onlookers. I was feeling a juicy dare-devil liberation in my skin. I felt skippy and light.

I maneuvered my way into the bathroom to take a shower and filled my water bottle before exiting the apartment. I walked to the nearest bus stop and rode the bus to the last stop. I got off and didn't know where I was. However, I did see a Bank Of America ATM. I changed my pin number and placed my wallet and a pocket knife into a mailbox. I walked several more blocks and gave out some flyers for my website. After about forty minutes of walking. I felt a great rush. I was singing "ring-around the rosy". I was remembering African folktales and Disney stories.

My subconscious mind was becoming more conscious and I was not at war within. I had surrendered myself to the whim of instinct.

What an ordeal.

I was by the Downtown Berkeley Bart Station when I began to strip. Yes. I made my way to a building garage and felt an incorrigible urge to be as free as I could be. And for me, in that moment, that translated to nudity. To be bare, literally, emotionally, and spiritually. In retrospect, I wish I had been in an African village, or at a friend's summer house in the hills. No such luck. The Asian security male on duty looked scared shitless. It was funny to me, as I was doing it. I even chased him for a second. In a way, I felt completely aware of my actions, but I was not operating from my conditioned state. I felt released. Completely unhindered and utterly fearless. My egoic mind had succumbed to cosmic love.

And, then came the cops.

8pm; January 10th 2012

This time I felt a lot of negative energy from my environment.

I was asked my age and only thought to share: 1/3/11. Why? In my state of my mind, I felt that 0 was an artificial number. I also did not want to give data about myself. I did not feel like conversing or identifying myself because I was becoming a self I had not known. I was taken back to the same ER. I was told to pee in a cup and decided to pour water into it and add spit. When I returned the cup to the nurse, he spoke to me like I was an idiot and deemed it something other than urine. In seconds, I was escorted to a bed, tied down, injected and not told what was going on.

I had never felt so violated or un-human in my present life existence. I reacted with rage. I could only spit, when all limbs were bound. My neck was forcefully held down and a

veil like metal material was placed around my mouth, like a muzzle.

I was held for nine days at the John George Pavilion Psychiatric Ward. I was administered 10 mg of Zyprexa twice a day because the doctor diagnosed me as manic Bi-Polar with psychotic features. I suppose when one asks, “why are you here,” and you say, ‘Human Existence,’ you must be batshit crazy. I had only wanted medication to help me sleep, which is what I had thought that yellow-orange Zyprexa pill was for the first few days. When I inquired about the pill, the head nurse, Jessica, told me that if I didn’t take it, I would receive an injection. I was told that if I did not comply with treatment that I could be held for fourteen to thirty days, or longer.

Compliance was dictated of me.

I had strong reservations about the drug. I felt loopy and disoriented. It was an inoculation against my- self. The rapidity of my thoughts was orgasmic and multiplying. It was a liberator emotion. I went from feeling like a mouse in a cage to a lion in the living room. I wanted to roar and psst. I believed it to be my birthright. I was in no way scared of myself. Could I have put myself in danger had I not been medicated? Yes. Is medication the only way I could have been protected? No. I needed to be in a semi-enclosed environment and allowed to express the emotional and spiritual experience, as opposed to suppressing and demonizing it. (An atypical occurrence of being in jail was exactly what did the job.)

After I played “Dr. Says”, accepted meds and became a zombie for nine days, I was transferred to a halfway house at 22505 Woodroe Place, Hayward, CA. This place was

polished. I entered with just a pair of combat boots and a jacket I found, and tagged, in a squat in Oakland. I had lost all my belongings the night I wandered into Berkeley. I forgot to tell the arresting officers and paramedics that my bags were 15 yards away. Bummer or destiny, damn, that night felt like an overlapping of times and eras. The land felt so alive. Everything felt so full with life. I thought it to be the garden of Eden. I felt so guided. No longer overcome by cosmic energy, I began to worry. The 18th of January, is this how this year will begin for me? Did I not see the height to which I was thinking? Did I pierce some hole in my consciousness? Was I a soon to be tortured soul? Deep in my heart, I was unexpectedly pleased by the situation. I had only two pennies and felt so intact. I felt whole, for what felt like the first time.

I could no longer play "Dr Says," I stopped swallowing the pill for about two days. I soon requested a lowered dosage from the doctor. This nasty Santa Claus looking psychiatrist told me that I was still in a manic state and needed the 10mg of Zyprexa to go up to 20mg. I was so outraged I went mute. I met with him about three days later, at which point, I was no longer taking any of the medication. He insisted on seeing me to badger me with his rhetorical egotism. He even tried to use my education against me by mocking my intelligence, considering that I graduated from Smith College. I simply played happy-as-daisies with him and watched him speak with himself, with me present. When he had reached the inevitable conclusion that I was not going to indulge his pathology, I left and acted pleased. I played more silly nigger to be less of a crazy negro. A bit of wit.

Muddy waters slowly become sticky.

Four days had passed since I last took Zyprexa before the racing thoughts hit me. I was at it again. Mind untying knotted thoughts, stretching sentences into theories and spinning syllables like throwing dice in a game of craps. I was splitted and splat. Thinking, “what the, what the, shit is that?” I was going in and out of metaphor and dimensional forms. My skin felt like a receiver and energies became tactile in sensation. I knew I had to go back to John George Pavilion, I just wanted to have more autonomy in the situation. I decided to be more vocal in my experience this time. I felt more aware of what I was feeling and how it was altering my perception of reality. I was able to make lunch, bacon, lettuce, tomatoes and some sort of sausage, with two housemates. The woman was in her early forties and a recovering Meth Addict. She was once a body-builder, with two jobs and a student. The man was a fifty year-old veteran who endured very strong suicidal and homicidal urges. We were all so gentle and worn. I felt very safe and pure (intent) energy. We were able to make references to the bible, movies and songs and have a multidimensional conversation.

I felt surrounded by members of my spirit family. I felt a kinship that rendered me a sister, mother, aunt, grandmother, and cousin in a village of Earth’s people.

Of the housemates, A Sri Lankan man took a liking to me. He told me his life story and I just felt for the guy. He experienced a brand of racism that I believe stressed the parameters of his mind. He began to feel suicidal when the voices in his head provided that directive. The Dr. said he should take Zyprexa, and after seven years he developed diabetes, a documented outcome from the consumption of this medication. He had lost his wife, and for legal reasons

not clear to me, he never received the full inheritance. He remarried and he and his wife were in separate shelters.

A young black man had been medicated for ADD and bi-polar disorder since the age of eight. He developed an eye spasm, of sorts. His eyes would get really wide, bulging and frightening, but he was completely unaware. He had a soft heart. His mother was addicted to crack-cocaine and may have used heroin. She was dating a white man who treated her poorly but to whom most of her love and attention was given. This black boy had lived in foster homes and group homes and was a tenth grade dropout. He ended up in John George Pavilion for a month because, while selling weed, the cops rolled up on him and he raised an electric saw at them. Yes, sounds crazy, but if he had a gun, he would have been serving real prison time; or he would have been murdered by cops. He knew he had to protect himself from duplicitous street competitors and could play crazy for 5-0. It was quite genius of him. His soul felt true.

The staff were sad. One thing I have learned about social services, as I write this from a women's shelter in Brooklyn New York, is that some humans have lost all morality to their scrappy egos. It's one thing to be crazy, it's another thing to have people still expect you to act otherwise. I felt like I was in a daycare for the 'special children,' just saying. I believe the most obese of the staff were the most indignant. One such woman compared my recent and bewildering diagnosis of bi-polar disorder to her high blood pressure. I was insulted and bemused. Weighing around two-hundred and seventy pounds on a five foot three-inch frame, she did not suspect a causality relationship with her deep love for Mc' Donald's. As for my Kundalini, Yaweh awakening, it would be

empirically, and medically, difficult to properly treat and diagnose by any standard of western medicine. I digress.

I felt a hex of evil had been trailing my soul. Once I lost my quartz crystal, the one I found on a commune farm in Virginia, the universe began to trim dead flesh off my soul. It was like peeling an orange with a knife. And considering that I found and read *The Wound Healer*, by Henri Nouwen; and *The Seat of My Soul* by Gary Zukav, I knew my spirit guides were keeping me abreast on my transformation. Also, to be crazy out my skull and yet reading such pivotal books in a half-way house, divine intervention was not amiss.

After lunch and a bit of napping, and performing what felt like a breaking the spell ritual, I felt ready for the next step. It was about three that afternoon when my roommate, who I shared a connecting bathroom with, told me that the cops were out front. I immediately assumed the cops were there for me. I assumed this because the staff had told me that if clients were off their medication and became symptomatic, the sheriff and paramedics would be called. I wanted to walk to the officer instead of being pinned down to a bed or the ground.

After ensuring that my body was doused in olive oil, from hair to toes, I approached the cop car barefoot with two tops and pants with a hat on. I had placed my phone in the hat and had about two-hundred pieces of ¾-inch lined-paper that read: 'Truths89.com.'

Me: "Officer, can you please take me to John George. I am not feeling well"

Officer Micah Bennett: "Have you hurt yourself?"

Me: "No, but I was recently diagnosed with Bi-polar and have not been taking my medicine."

Officer Micah Bennett: "If you have not hurt anyone, you are fine."

Me: "But officer I don't feel well. I need to go to John George."

Officer Micah Bennett: "You're fine."

Me: "I want to be proactive and preventive, can you please take me to John George."

I started to act unconsciously. I began to pull at his door knob, which was a silver skull with red eyes. Yes. I laughed. His enlarged black crisscrossed pupils sold this scene in the movie that is my life.

Officer Micah Bennett: "Leave it alone."

Me: "Take me to John George"

Officer Micah Bennett: "Get off"

I spoke, I pleaded and then the eight ounce cup of lukewarm water, which I was sipping on, was tossed onto his face. It was instinct. I felt that I needed to demonstrate my case. Who better than the officer to be the object through which a statement is explicitly understood.

I sought to convince an empty shell, badge toting cretin that supposed insanity can be self-aware. I succeeded, overwhelmingly. His eyes were burnt with fury. I felt giddy

like a toddler who knows she's disobeyed a rule and takes joy in watching adults lose their minds. This officer thrashed me into the ground and put the weight of his entire body into the back of my left thigh with his knee. I went limp. I was Buddha at that moment. It hurt. Luckily, I am a very strong woman. He pulled me up to the trunk of his car and cuffed my arms. He muttered something about me being lucky and something about me being killed. He was pulling my locs and pressed his index finger behind the back of my left ear. When I swallowed my spit, he pressed in deeper, where the wisdom tooth rests. He led me to another cop car by my locs. Tossed my body in the vehicle. He slammed the door, barely missing my foot.

I cannot recall my Miranda rights being read to me.

A second officer appeared, and requested my name. I told him 'Aziza'. He asked for a last name but I only gave 'Aziza.' I kept repeating 'Agape' and 'Love is Destiny.' Officer Micah Bennett returned to say: "You bitch, cunt, you're going to die in Santa Rita." As he spoke I did not look into his eyes. I felt extreme evil energy. It was thick black and gray like smoke. My only retort was, 'Agape.' I wasn't entirely lost in the colonies of my mind. I was aware of the danger but I felt the spiritual significance of the human experience. This is why the sound of the ambulance and the fire truck gave me a great sense of relief. The paramedics were apprehensive about taking me. They had me in the chair and had rolled me into the van and were proceeding to check my heart rate. I looked at them both and said: 'I cannot leave with that officer. He will kill me. I will spit in your face if necessary.' Both agreed that they didn't want that. The paramedic who sat in the back with me was Jesus. He was a chubby Latinx man, kind and flirty father of twins. He liked my tattoos and

piercings. The results showed that my heart was tachycardic. By this time several more officers appeared and took pictures of my stomach. I have a tattoo in Latin, when translated means: "I will either find a way or make a way." They took a head shot and I gave them a big cheesy smile, with teeth and all! The ambulance was escorted to the ER by Officer Micah Bennett and his partner, again, Eden Medical Center. It was my third visit in two weeks.

I was chained to the bed for eight hours. The first hour was spent trying to engage a young black girl with purple hair extensions. I was treated with a saline solution and four potassium pills. Veronica, the nurse, was a black Muslim wearing a red scarf on her head. We got on the topic of the movie Avatar and she laughed about the people being purple. But her eyes were curious. I only asked her for water. She often ignored me. Unfortunately, I had to make my request with greater vigor by announcing her first name and demanding the water. I felt bad because she was a black nurse in a white space being confronted by another black woman in my state. Although I held this consideration, she did not have to ignore me. And even while I was sitting in my own piss and chained to a bed, I was considering these fucking inter/intra-racial dynamics. As for the piss, if they decided to treat me like a dog, I took it as a recess from social norms and went to town. If I may share, I find that urine has some significance. I believe it is a representation for something I have yet to identify.

I found it curious that the male and female officer who guarded me were both of Pisces sun signs. And as I was being transferred to the EMS bed, a white male suffering from painful intestinal troubles noted, with uncomfortable excitement, that he saw light surrounding my hand, when

the cuffs were removed. He began to call me a witch, in that fear abiding way. I was super aware that I was speaking within two worlds when I said: "all power needn't be used for the sake of wickedness". (I paraphrase.)

I got a ride to John George Pavillion around 12am on January 25th. Upon arrival, I received 20mg of Zyprexa; which I said was too much and requested Klonopin. Another patient said it helped her agitation. Eh, I thought it could help me too. As I was taking the medication, I had two guards surround me and I just started cursing at them. They seemed so useless, like human cardboard just taking up space and refusing to be recycled. I woke up to pee and could barely open my eyes. That medication was a tranquilizer. It was really too fucking strong for my system. But when you are deemed crazy, you lose governance over your own humanity. A little after nine that morning, I was driven to Santa Rita Jail by an officer. I was in a holding cell with three other women for several hours. One woman was being charged with prostitution and was about to serve something like six years. I think she may have had drugs mixed in with other charges. She was distraught and was laying on my lap. She called me "ma," like mother. It was the second time a woman in California had identified me as a mother.

My jail uniform was a green size large pants and X-large shirt. I didn't take the panties or bra. I just thought that was unsanitary. We had to, ironically, strip naked, bend over, lift our butt cheeks and cough. I felt spiritually violated. I felt emotionally triggered and thought of the slave ship when I felt that flash light on my anus. I tried to laugh it off but I was irate. We spent about twenty-two hours in our cells. We were let out for two meals, a shower, commissary, and TV. I was on the Green block in cell number twelve. The toilet had

been outlined with six pads. There was a book on the table, Creation Spirituality by Matthew Fox. Everything seemed surreal. I didn't have time to fear or worry. I felt so present with it all. I got paper, a pencil, and Vaseline from the woman in cell number eleven. She was arrested for sleep walking and stealing. She couldn't remember any of it because she had been taking five, or more, anti-psychotic pills.

There was a guard who reminded me of Nemo from Finding Nemo. She was in her early thirties, short cut brunette hair, soft butch. I painfully wish I caught her name. I only know her last name begins with the letter 'B.' She treated us with dignity. All in all, I was mystified by jail. It felt like I was on the set of Oz, the HBO show about prison. I felt a sense of resolve being encased in cement and metal. The chains I felt quickly melting away in my mental mind were reimposed in the physical world. I wasn't as scared as I thought I'd be. I make a habit of feeling at home amongst women, even if we are to rest in dungeons. I met other feelers who had become addicts. Souls dying to numb the sight and sensitivity nailed to powerlessness. I felt the wounded unable to heal. If skin were soul, their lesions were tunnels into obscure darkness. I was at peace with the pain. I felt reverence and wholeness beside it.

There was a young black woman whose hair and scalp was burnt, and her breath bitter. She and I had an unsuspecting kinship. Memory is not exact, but we exchanged words one day and then she lifted me up. Her embrace was rich and joyous. It felt like Simba from Lion King when he was hugged by the gray haired monkey. The entire time I spent at Santa Rita Jail was layered with spiritual undertones. Elements that are beyond my current intellectual grasp were deeply felt. It only lasted five days but it was a lifetime in its set of truths.

The food was bad. I had no lotion, soap, only a toothbrush. On the third day, I had video court. I didn't understand this version of justice, but I went along with the program. We waited all day to be seen. I spent time in the changing room. There were women from all the four colored units, primary colors. I got close with a woman named Tina Marie from my unit. She was a recovering alcoholic and addicted to crack-cocaine, but her energy was warm.

As we were conversing, I decided to write on the yellow walls. I had an obsession with leaving proof. I wrote "Yemaya Aziza," and "Truths89.com" on the walls with a piece of broken pencil lead. Language became magic and the written word was how I casted spells. I was under the impression that my name was misspelled. My name is Nigerian, Igbo; however, tribes are a product of colonialism. Yemaya is a Yoruba name for the goddess of the water. I thought myself to be a witch, a true goddess. I knew I appeared a bit nutty, but I was in the green mental unit. After eavesdropping, I learned that many crimes were committed out of survival or were just false accusations. I was soaking these women's lives up. A woman named Isis was nineteen and had been charged with robbery and attempted murder. She had an alibi, her boyfriend and her six month old baby. But there she was, in yellow, for those with kids. I started tearing. I saw a thousand women in her eyes. I heard the cries of their children. I was in agony. I tried to recoup myself by sitting by Tina. The women were being led out. I asked a Chicano woman her name and she said, "Mary." Our eyes were speaking, but no words were said. I felt the presence of a Navajo elder in her. Just as they were almost out, I ran to the door and yanked Isis into my arms. I told her it will all be okay. I felt my daughter in her spirit.

I have not returned to this piece since 2013. I hope to one day complete the Negress Chronicles of a Spiritual Rebirth.

The Irony of Manifest Destiny

Packed ships carried enslaved Africans, to slaughter of the soul; Colonizers hunted, sold, and murdered Indigenous folks. And now that the White State has been fully constructed, Nonwhite bodies have been deemed clutter; an abhorrence to their democracy.

“Send them back. To where they came from.”

As if this White State is not complicit in the pillaging of developing nations. Send them home to where you extract your linen and hors d'oeuvres. Where you target your military and have blood become a river of ancestors.

“Send them back. To where they came from.”

So you can tell yourself that your American Dream isn't built upon a foundation of imperialist terrorism. Send them home so you are not reminded of your white supremacist legacy. White wash your entitlement and call it hard work. Because you didn't have a silver spoon of whiteness to feed you from birth.

‘And how exactly did whiteness arrive here?’

The Scarecrow & the Matrix of Oz

I was rather manic upon my arrival. I noticed her in the dining hall. She was quiet and polite. Her gestures were welcoming, but she appeared shy. She is of Estonian descent. Her name, in English, meant Dorothy. Dorothy and I took a liking to one another in the psych ward at the New York-Presbyterian Westchester Behavioral Health Center. She was there because she was experiencing persistent suicidal ideations to walk onto train tracks and be succumbed by a train collision. She arrived after me, and left before me. Over the course of our overlapping week, during which there was a holiday, we grew very fond of one another. She was in her mid-forties, and I was days away from my twenty-sixth birthday.

She was married with two sons and a daughter; and I had only known to love women. She had very seductive eyes, a peculiar accent, and a robust bosom. We flirted. So much so the staff would not allow us in each other's rooms. What I enjoyed the most were the hugs we exchanged. I felt her spirit pouring into my cup, so thoroughly and generously. I pleaded with her on certain days to not contemplate her demise; for she was incredibly worthy of life and love. She was a housewife, dependent upon her emotionally and romantically absent husband. If sensual touch were fluid, my Dorothy was dehydrated. I convoked the grace within to help tend to her dissatisfaction. Upon her departure, I wrote her a letter, providing her with all of my contact information; which was accompanied by very tender words.

After we were both discharged from the hospital, we met up on three separate occasions: Once by Bryant Park, where we

shared a cup of tea. During this interaction, I noticed the markings on her silver wedding band. It appeared identical to a pinky ring I had come to own from utilizing a resource known as The Bottomless Closet. Unfortunately, my admission to the Psych ER, at New York Presbyterian in Washington Heights, was very traumatic and my ring was not returned to me. This was of significance to me, and I had no way to prove it. Secondly, we met up at the north-side of Central Park, for a picnic and a bit of lap sitting. I wore a red dress; and when we said goodbye, I walked away simmering with desire. Thirdly, we met up for a meal in midtown. Something had changed. The fondness was there, but to me, it became sacred. She wanted to come to my place, which I also desired. But felt that we experienced a passion not of this world. You see, the mania that landed me in that psych-ward with her may have been precipitated by her. Let me elaborate.

I am uncertain of the time of day. As per usual, with dalliances in the spirit world, I had a plethora of visions and thought frames that were revealing a story to me. As if one was communicating not with the deaf, or the blind, but the incorporeal. The flood of images, and thoughts, and feelings were so overwhelming. I felt transported to a space within the matrix in which I felt compelled to insurrect. It's very difficult to describe the intangible. But in summation, I felt as though my spirit tribe had summoned my attention to one of our own. I felt a story being told about someone being raped, almost spiritually. In my heart, I was in agony. I was literally bellowing: 'Go, Go, I'll take care of it.' During this exchange, which was experienced during psychosis, I was crying and even threw a Mason jar glass at my wall. It shattered. It felt symbolic and cathartic. In this same moment, once I had felt the release of energy, I lowered my

body to the ground. On my bed, there was a smoky quartz crystal. In the same way that one's thoughts seem to be sourced from elsewhere, I turned to my bed to lift the crystal.

To my wildest imagination, I witnessed what I could only describe as a holographic viewing of entities for which this dimension is not accessible. They were humanoid, and I could see two bodies in stasis. Both were women, one with blue skin and long black dreadlocks; the other, white with blonde hair. The garments appeared to be of majesty. I felt as though my thoughts were transcribing, through telepathy, the essence of what was revealed to me in that crystal. It appeared as though folks were walking up to a podium, of sorts, and casting votes or rendering their blessings. I could see the colors red and orange, like tents rising and blending. I had dreams that were like spark notes to what was unfolding upon me. My spirit felt a sense of joy and trepidation, for how could this be my experience? It was a ceremony and it felt cosmic in nature. Altogether, I probably crystal gazed for thirty minutes. Seamlessly, I found myself being taken away by the EMT's, who were accompanied by four police officers.

This was probably my fifth psychiatric hospitalization. The year is 2015. I am days away from my twenty-sixth birthday; my date of discharge had been delayed due to Martin Luther King Jr. Day. I digress, back to Dorothy. In between one of the saunters Dorothy and I would take in the hallway of our psych ward unit, she disclosed that her very first sexual encounter was one of rape. Someone she had known. And a matter she became consumed with shame over. I do not have words to describe what acrobatics my mind was flipping. In my body, I was tumbling. *Dorothy almost forgot*

she is not a straw man, but life itself. Was I supposed to reiterate this fact to her spirit? She was no sleeping beauty, and my lips were chapped that day we spent in Central Park, as I sat on her lap and embraced her being. With our bodies entangled, I felt energy rushing through chakras that had never been so porous. It was electric, and ecstatic.

Although we could not save each other from our circumstances, we shared a spark that fueled us into an enthusiastic survivalism. If thirst was our torment, for each other, we were a fresh lake. I still swim in the memories she conjures. I believe she was my wife in another life. And although she and I have completely parted ways, except for random likes and comments on Instagram; if that fire she and I exchanged was a remnant of cosmic love, I cannot help but pray that whomever I am to be with in this life comes swiftly.

I thank you, Dorothy.

Holy Wood

My fire can no longer burn dry;
Life force is on high supply

In the past, I have played shy;
Smoked myself numb and high

Sobriety, the notion—I shall try!
To spirit, I will no longer lie

Romance

I would hate to settle for Diet Coke,
When the Universe wishes to bless me with nectar.

I have found the riddle in this joke:
No matter my path, Spirit is my protector.

***“I have chosen to fast, for wisdom is vast.
Desire, I will recast; for chosen family, I seek to
amass.”***

Recondition

Jew by Choice,
I rejoice

Jew by Blood,
Black Blood

Admission

40 Acres and a Mule,
This dimension is a school

Over all, the divine shall rule;
Spirit gold is for a wise fool

The Twelfth Cell Block

Five days before my 23rd birthday
I find myself in Santa Rita Jail
The women wear green garments
Distinctly, for mental health

I am in the midst of my first awakening
Psychosis and mania and visions
My being submerged in wonderment
Everything was magical, and everyone

I had fallen asleep, one night
When I awoke, I was not in my body
I was weightless and floating
And yet, I could see and hear

I have a stark image of her body
A priestess who had been ablaze

Her words, as old as blood
Sumerian, I told myself

In my deepest of being, I knew
This is an initiation of the highest form
I must've prepared for that moment
Because I knew what to say to her

"Love is Destiny," I recited
Until my eyes opened
I could barely breathe
Heart pounding, eyes tearing

A Venustic Initiation, for me
In that cell block, the toilet
Was outlined with pads; and in plain sight
A book, titled: *Creation Spirituality*

Fully affirmed my spirit
But the journey had just begun
Santa Clara Jail was my hell
I almost died of dehydration

Taken to the emergency room
Saline drip replenished my veins
Never made it to the judge
Returned to the Psychiatric Pavillion

My mother came across the country
To return me home, for I had lost everything
With me, I took divine orders
Knowing, the path shall unfold

My People of Biafra

They almost wiped us out.
Not in ancient times.
But in the late 1960's.
Less than a century ago.

My father, the only son.
Of seven kin.
I, his first born.
In the America's.

Call me Adamma, first daughter.
The reunion of lost tribes.
In a post-colonial regime.
Descendant of Slaves and the Colonized.

I was born of HaShem.
Out of Egypt, out of Babylon.
Captive no more.
My people will find the way.

We are fertile stardust.
Upon an eager earth.
For we are born of worth.
Awaiting the moment of rebirth.

Arriving

Igbo Jew
Lush Hue

From holy water, I have swam
Uslaughtered lamb

Consciousness shifting
Curse lifting, spirit sifting

***“I casts off self-doubt and landed in a slice of
paradise; the divine is precise.”***

Unwavering Sigh

I have surrendered to on high;
I can no longer deny

Determined to comply;
Upon faith I shall rely

“I awake in the dream, like an unstitched seam.”

Forthright

A humble proselyte
seeking light, gaining sight

Intent on satiating a spiritual appetite

To Hebrew, I am a neophyte
the path will not be fulfilled overnight

In the journey, I shall delight

***“My heart is tender; to Spirit, I surrender.
I welcome the splendor.”***

A Conversation with a Rabbi

Upon sharing my desire to learn the Torah and convert,
he asked, “is your mother Jewish?”

This question caused me much pain.
Let me explain:

My mother is the descendant of slavery.
My mother’s mother a sharecropper.
My mother’s mother’s mother a sharecropper.
My great-great grandmother a slave.

I replied: ‘No. To my knowledge, my mother is not
Jewish.’
She is a Seven-Day Adventist.

The Rabbi asked why my faith of upbringing does not
serve me.

Christianity was a tool used to enslave.
The language I speak is endemic of colonization.
My spirit is seeking translation.

The God I worship must be of my own choosing.

‘I seek your guidance’, I tell the Rabbi.
But he tells me I needn’t convert, for my mother is not
Jewish.

I tell him, ‘White Supremacy has excluded me from my
choice of faith.’
Seeking to obstruct my tribe’s fate; which of the
Abrahamic Religions will serve me?

I cried. Enraged. My God has not forsaken me!

Elohim, I will learn your ways.

I will hold you in reverence.

No matter the Zionism I will face.

Because spirit bestows me grace.

**“Love is a stock, for which the depreciation of value
does not subscribe to the law of man.”**

“Love is a renewable resource, a spiritual recourse.”

***“Reserving the generosity of love specifically for
eroticism is a maladaptation of capitalism.”***

L'Chaim

Lifting the veil
Life I inhale

All praise to Elohim
The scheme is supreme

Middle Passage erasure
Transatlantic Slavery ain't Kosher

With composure, I seek exposure
No longer a lost tribe of circumscribe

Observance, my soul has prescribed
Queer Jew Negress, spirit inscribed

The Return has arrived,
12 tribes revived

B'ezrat HaShem

***“Whom I chose to love neither authenticates, nor
devalues the very Blackness that my soul
appreciates.”***

***“If we all come from a Black woman, and we
are made in the image of God, who is the white man?
Spiritual colonization was always the plan.”***

Atlas Undone

A drink of you, I have desired;
romantic dreams inspired

But impermanence is tragic,
when the fire loses heat

Sometimes, magic is just magic—
no matter how sweet

The Longing

I crave you like the salt does the sea;
there are aquatic farms in my dreams

where we'd be fishes and free
to roam the depths of the sea

you a starfish, and I a seahorse
how I cherish the thought, in due course

***“Denouncing the self-pity committee because
self-authority is damn pretty.”***

***“My spirit’s palate for love is framed upon empathic
mutuality, transparent vulnerability and
enthusiastic accountability; however the appetite of
my soul has improperly nurtured my heart because
sweet and savory makes lust rush—I have fasted, I
have binged, now, I will simply flush.”***

Social Science

if love is infinite
and time is finite

intentionality is the currency
defining the value of frequency

***“I have conflated the politics of love for its essence;
learned its obsolescence and vowing
for love’s quintessence.”***

Love

in its abundance,
I discover transcendence

an invitation to vibrational frequencies
of wholeness and divine mysteries

The Fuck Outta Hur'

Like, "the fuck outta here"
roars my stealth womb

Where the cellular memories rest
preparing to infuse the next generation

My womb has ceded this dimension
the genes and their expressions

Are maps I must chart;
and treasure I must discover

The lineage is oppressive—systemic and endemic;
I concur, the approach need be alchemic

But jewelry doesn't form itself in the Earth
it is we who carve and chisel at these metals

A loaf of silver, a pie of gold
refinement is imperative

Then why the surprise, when the descendants of a
history miswritten
have tales and wounds for which your books do not
provide margins

The indignant audacity to pathologize survival;
My black essence is the marriage of death and life

No ship to go overboard,
like root women, we make due

So the fuck outta hur' with
pseudo medicalization and dehumanization

Stigma is the intention, the motivation,
however, is suppression and annihilation

I am here. I made it. End of story.
no apologies, no explanations

My blackness, my melanin, is a gift
for which this dimension, is amiss

Dear P.I.C, New Jim Crow and Whomever

Structural oppression and inequity are like
Riddles in a broken puzzle

Bail reform is a mutation of the Prison Industrial
Complex;
An infestation permeating our communities

In ways that increase and intensify the policing
Of poor and brown and black folks

Crime and justice is the slogan;
But the mission is control

The redistribution of wealth and resources through
social welfare systems,
As a means of equitable stratification could be effective

But would upset the pyramid scheme—
That is capitalism

Only one funeral will bring peace to this matter;
Mother Earth has been speaking

Tick, Tock.

Tongue-Tied

She versus they, for me—
Is like Black versus American

I occupy both of these entities,
as spaces and identities

Like the nation-state,
gender is a social construct

Nature versus nurture,
I am a Venn diagram

Topography or geopolitics?
Melanin and ovaries

I exist along an intersectional spectrum;
Of being, wholeness seeking embodiment

3-Cents

When white trauma goes unnamed and is repressed,
white individuals increase their complicity in the
trauma of brown, black and indigenous folx.

Because hurt people hurt people, systemic oppression is
a result of white pain collectively sustaining the cycle of
white supremacy, which necessitates black, brown and
indigenous trauma.

To my white ally, no matter where we meet along the
spectrum of intersectionality, I lovingly request that you
interrogate your own traumatic history and enter into a
space of healing; so you may cultivate internal space to
reduce the cycles of trauma and oppression enacted
upon and experienced by the folx you wish to support in
collective liberation.

*I will meet you at the vein, where pulsation sustains our
vibration, within the heart of our evolution.*

Yo, Mah

I's a bad bish
Gentlefolk, all day though

But I have won wars
Ordered by the stars

This vigor births, as it does kill
I am cultivating these energies

Self-acceptance propels one into healing
You cannot renovate a home to which you are not the
owner

Nor can you develop an aspect of self
That is consumed by shame and self-rejection.

I's a bad bish,
Word, Mah

Contemplating Purgatory

The war has been lost,
it will forever be lost

Freedom fighters are dandelions
in Monsanto's farm flooded with roundup

In how many battles can we be victorious,
begs the question?

Plucked by a sinister lynch,
the noose is simply inflation

Critique the dream, why don't we?
can the earth be refurbished?

We are in the Garden of Eve,
and the seeds have yet to rot

***We are nothing by animated soil
amidst refracting light***

**“When suppression becomes a disorder, the path
takes flight; healing occurs when the wound
is too septic for the soul.”**

***“I ain’t dead, nor am I defected; I am the pendulum
swing oscillating between surviving and thriving.
Celebrate, perhaps appreciate, but please do not
denigrate the path of trauma and recovery.”***

Budding Friendship

“If birds of a feather flock together,”
May I soar the sky with you?

You seem to appreciate breath the way a fish does
water;
May we share a swim within the seas of our souls?

Just a stroll of possibility, a dice roll

***“I must gut my emotional house for the
construction of my spiritual palace.”***

Ode to Assata

I do not want to die
Nor do I wish to go to jail— again

But the revolution is alive
The baton, in me, shall thrive

From the underground railroads of Tubman
To the presidency of Obama

What do WE folk have to show?
Militarized police forces and Trump

White terrorism has the longest legacy
We folk need to ask, what earth we'd have

If the fight for freedom wasn't sustained
By a myriad of intersectional forces of systematic
oppression

I'd rather have a habitable planet
Than democratic capitalism

It's not working for us!
The seas are crying dead fish

Everyone has a stake in this fight
Everyone.

One planet
One people

Justice of the Nation

I feel for them,
I really do

My maternal grandfather is from Panama
My father, Nigeria

They made it here
Different day, same cause

And for that reason,
I am here—an American

Now these refugees are occupying informal prisons
Constitution took a recess?

Can't help but remember those 4 years;
Unable to return to America

I feel for them,
I really do

There's nothing like your first place of home
The terror they must be experiencing!

Our social empathy is impaired
Heterogeneity, and the clutch on the stratification of
wealth

I have prayed long enough
Off to the polls, to the prisons, to the clinics

We must keep the love for life sustained
With rigorous civic engagement

Next, they will come for us
Can you doubt it?

Won't catch me freezing

Backed Up

The entrance to my womb
Is lined with copper

For if I were to breastfeed,
All I bear is trauma

Unlike my foremothers,
Perhaps not

But the risk is too high
For an unrelenting world

It began

Yucky and powerless
Incest, uncle or daddy?

Now, I unravel the knots
In perception and threat assessment

Never knowing, even now
How unusual?

It began hollow
And life fills that void

“But the wound
Is where the light enters”

Codependency

Africa or Harlem???
Imperialism and Capitalism
A symbiotic relationship

Colonialism of yesterday
Gentrification of today

Oh, Democracy
What do you have to say
For yourself tomorrow?

Because Globalization
Sounds like Matricide

***“Self- care is an arsenal for the expression of self-
love; self- acceptance in a world committed to conflict
and self-loathing is revolutionary.”***

Summer Courting ‘19

Chocolate and Vanilla Swirl
Both were mine with whom to twirl
Real down south and other south
Incompatibilities show slow

When it rains, it pours—
I’m flooded, up to my ears!
Drought is a twister
Peace is salient

Labels are like rings?
A shared communion;
My yearning — too great?
Twiddle me earth-wonder...

“I miss you like a shooting star does the sky...”

(Racial) Triggers

I ain't going out like my grandma
she took the best love I knew when she died
but I ain't going out like my grandma
forty-three years in public housing
and taken out by a stroke in her bed

After losing my mind, and finding my name
I have nothing to fear
I's fit to manifest MY dreams
I's the wrong Negress
TOO committed to the process

Bar the sky,
I'll become gust
This Negress ain't with it
NOT ONE BIT

Spirit, I am testifying

Dear Father:

I believe naming myself was the deed to my own destiny. As the only one of my bloodline, it is fitting that I have a name that reflects spirit. Perhaps I am destined to create my own lineage. Not through blood; but through frequency.

Dalu Chukwu,

30

Walking into the woman
I have prayed to become
Bearing wounds, no longer numb

Pluralistic perceptions and interpretations
Clarifying questions and accountability
Emotional and psychological amputations
Belief in self-efficacy and surmountability

At this juncture in life, the road signs
Caution me to veer with wisdom;
For all that glitters, little shines

Baggage

stripped to the stains
of wounded memories

no longer a casualty

the hurting is unbecoming
when joy is a priority

The Times

a womb contracting,
but the pulse is weak

what will America become,
as we swim up the creek

democracy to despotism,
mind the doublespeak

Black Love

Negress to Negress
They my *only* Empress

God has a hue, she is true
In the mirror, we rendezvous

The bucket I bear, spills with pain
Neither profane, nor ordain—but I reign

Over the years, I pour it out
Dreaming of a drought

When the wound can speak
Shame loses its mystique

I am the practitioner of my liberation
My sojourn to self-love was a deliberation

The itinerary to my destination
Intimates that black love is salvation

Devoted I am

I Hold These Truths To Be Self-Evident

In the last weeks of my 22nd year, it happened
Kundalini awakening, spiritual emergency, psychosis
Dimensions unnamed were revelatory
Spirit torch bearer bellowing my ancestors' prayers
From sidewalk to psych ward to incarceration

My diagnosis corrupted my self-identity
Further marginalized, incomprehensible vulnerability
I am reconciling these experiences
Because my self-conception became fragmented
Self-doubt lingers were assurance laid claim

You see,

I am attracting folk
For whom I don't feel worthy
Admittedly, these some dope ass soulful folk
Hence, I know my mind has been infiltrated
Because my heart is overwhelmed with grace

The gender dysphoria, though

Although I am committed to sagging titties
And gray locs at the age of sixty,
This, I know— but them days stay a-coming
When I feel a question mark on this body

I recite: 'Anarchy to binaries and dichotomies'
On them days, I pray: pray to love what is whole
And embrace the fluidity of my soul

As I understand it:

I am a mercenary of love fighting an internal war
Within my own psyche and spirit

One must understand,

I am a black daughter who has not been loved properly
The daughter of a mother who hadn't dealt with her
own wounds

It's an intergenerational trauma I seek to console

Now at the age of 30, I fear many things:

I fear dying of fire
Dying from drowning
Soul death by rape
And especially, hurting a black woman

This is my soul's wound
Inflicted before there were words
To grapple with articulation

Therefore: I plead, be patient with me
I am healing— it is a process
The seed is sprouting
Not yet a rose or a lily
An oak or an orchard
Just a bud on a stem

these are my truths...

Aqua

I am a fisher in the waters of a sea far from home
Deboarding my boat upon unknown land to roam

‘Let go,’ whispers that inner voice
‘You do, in fact, have a choice’

Never the *subject*, always the tone
Mental captivity, work to disown

Intersecting identities denuclearize
A summit to analyze

I am: *nothing and everything*
object and subject,
oppressed and the oppressor

To the sea, I shall return
Meanwhile, I need discern

Birthright

There is trauma in the blood
And the blood pulses through me

Can I have dialysis for racial trauma?

I was shy of ten, when I applied bleaching cream to my
knees
“The African” in an American Catholic school was now
amongst Africans in Africa

Then, I knew blackness was considered an imposition
But in father’s home, I learned the darkness to be the
culprit

In my mother’s home, I understood I could do no right
Internalizing that my womanhood was inconvenient

Erase the memories of silence between my mother and I
Mute the cacophony of the verbal assaults

All of this gives me pause...

I must lay my bed to rest in a home fit for my soul
Rooted within a stable foundation of love

And as I seek to find land for such a home
I paddle my psyche like an ocean submerged in plastic

Convince me that the colony can be freed as soon as the
mind
Because the cobwebs of my soul are spinning

Thoughts ruminate like echoes between the ears
Much is taboo, I ask: where does the healing convene?

Forfeit the Battle: Eye on War

Third-eye on hibernate,
Experientially, I navigate

I choose to admit,
Sanity does not always permit

Many a solstice before,
A warrior, myself, I swore

But on high noon,
I am a mistress of the moon

A witness to doom and bloom,
Swaying back and forth, with a kitchen broom

There are spirituals in my belly,
Sweet to the soul, like jelly

Because self-healing is an entitlement to become whole;
My sword has melted into the sun of my soul

Ah, I see

Trauma is a spiritual stroke;
Your self-esteem gon' choke

When forgiveness is the only option,
Ritual becomes an adoption

Set free the threads of pain;
Keep light and maintain

tbh,...

“Broken”, I tell her;
“I feel broken”

The war is over,
But it rages within me

My soul is stained,
Every wash cycle, incapable

***“I am a celestial being, collecting rays
of human experience.”***

Phenomenology

sacral energies are finding their way to the center,
on the eve of my 30th spin around the sun, this winter

I accept that the transubstantiation of my soul
will be a quiet journey with many angels to patrol

as my merkabah ship is acquiring fuel,
I recall my spirit's duel

this life, has so much wagered upon it;
a former priestess of the dark, I do admit

the path through eternity is not only of light;
in the confluence of these elements, I delight

Unsaid

My sister from another spirit,

sometimes, I miss you
and only a day has passed

one of my kinfolk,
to meet, at last

Venustic Initiation

*a proselyte afraid of worshiping,
most Gods are worthy of deference*

serpent rising, crown vibrating
bathed in fire, lit by the moon

the next superior octave,
brewing in my womb

Saturn between my thighs
third, are my eyes

birthing frequency
a *seer* in infancy

Half-Woke

dancing with the smoke
seeking my spirit folk

dressed in a cloak
as wise as oak

*I beckon you forth
co-creation, from henceforth*

Celestial Clemency

The mind is a jailer,
3rd dimensional sailor

Negress of Saturn,
Observing the pattern

Ego versus soul,
Am I whole?

Grant me the intuition,
To complete this transition

Small deeds, ostensibly;
Great works, presumably

Before my ship returns to matter,
The Divine, I wish to flatter

Stripe away the bars,
So I may absorb the stars

A photosynthetic star seed;
No longer a callous weed

The Dawning

'You broke me before I knew I was delicate'
I'd say to her in the crosshairs of a lucid dream

Mother, you never came for me, as a child?
Four years under that African Sun

PTSD is close—but they were family, too;
It's complicated, so now I chase skirts

Barely a season of this phase, hence the epiphany;
I haven't known the maternal intimacy I require

As if the umbilical cord was never severed,
Because an anchor baby like me—*like me*

Is the fusion of pure survival against all odds:
Colonialism. Literacy. Slavery. Asylums. Borders. Kidnap.
Molestation. Crack.
Abortions. Public Housing. Prison. Murder. Poverty.
Despair. Queer.

I want to birth theory, art, and healing with another
woman
I want to merge myself orgiastically through the heart

If only to supplant the sadness of the past
Like bricks of a foundation, you must renovate

One layer at a time: one thought, one word, one deed

Where You Think You Dey Go?

*Yes, you are mind sick and wish for a cure
Your pain is tremendous, life ensure*

But Sistah, if you plant a seed and cut the flower down
before it becomes a tree,
What wood will you have to build a home?
What will be the quality of your air, what of the
ecosystem necessary to support your being?

This is to say, your premature death will not free you
from the cycle of reincarnation
In fact, you will be without the wisdom, knowledge, and
experience
Necessary to facilitate your transition out of physical
form

My Sistah, if I have diabetes, I need insulin
If you live with bipolar disorder, you may need a mood
stabilizer or an anti-psychotic

A new identity may emerge, or you will integrate the
new with the former
Whatever the case may be, you must commit to life

The heartbeat is sacred, do not cease to know joy
I beg, oh.

Mind Sick

Itching like a tick
Suicide on her mind

A matter she can't flick

11:28 am

The texts began
A Negress like me

Out here pained
Her threshold can't be contained

Her words read like blood stains
My heart rattled, contemplating her remains

I needed to see her, but I was on the clock
I pleaded with her to meet me on my block

It's been 20 hrs since we FaceTimed
I know she is safe, but I also know the struggle

Multiple intersecting identities to juggle
More stigma to smuggle

*Sistah, you are mind sick
But your soul is silverquick*

*Lest you never forget
Treatment must be met*

*And a rich life you will live
Not—just—survive, but revive and thrive*

This, I promise you.

Me Too

Clearly, I can hear;
The empathy, I endear

But if I had a daughter,
She'd kill the way she drank water

“He say, she say,”
I teach her “God say”

*No man shall enter you without consent;
In such absence, death will be the intent*

The vulva is a gateway;
Not a rape railway

This my kin would know,
For sho'

***“Resilience is resistance to suicide;
Thine own destiny, no one can override.”***

Shh,...

Baby, I rock you in my arms
Shielding you from the night

No matter what harms
Remember, within you, there is light

Barren

'Sometimes, death is the only closure'

What is an ocean to the carcass
of beings trapped in the desert?

Last of my lineage, a single child
claimed –AFTER– I named myself

Although my womb is fertile,
through this dimension, I must hurtle

The seeds of my soul could not bloom in these weeds;
for thirst would consume their psycho-spiritual needs

Therefore, everything that I craft
is a delivery of divine impregnation

Cosmic observation is my occupation
for the courts of my higher imagination

Words, '00

We are walking in opposite directions
In the stairway, at 12 Alade Street, Ikeja, Lagos

This location marks home and prison
Crimes committed were seeking love

But her words crushed my spirit
And they were few...
“He will come for you”

She, a housemaid, not an adolescent
A woman, who spoke truth into me

She was referring to my Father
To this day, I wonder

“Second wife this, Second Wife that!”
His wife, my stepmother, would call me

The war may be over
But the scars are just realized

Would he had come for me?
Because the terror feels like he did

Sleep Talk: Dream Terror

Thirty Years strong
Naming the trauma seesaw
Of younger persevering years

I now realize,
The wound was there

Before Africa, Before Father
Before the grooming

Uncle Sammy,
What did you ask me for?

The year is 1994
Parkslope, Brooklyn
The Brownstones

Again, “Uncle” Sammy
What you asking for?

Fellatio, ‘we call it’
From me, 5 years precious

25 years after the fact
Memory is blurred

Sammy, what did you do to me?
For real, I need to know— now

Healing ain’t passive
And you were rather active

Every bath your mother gave
Was haunted by your gaze

Nigeria was a nightmare
Materializing fears of my young past

Age 8, where did the innocence flee
Psychological terror became commonplace

Child lost in unknown land
For unknown time

Threats of annihilation
Known too soon

As of Now,

I am renovating my life,
Assessing damages and seeking:
Accountability, Acknowledgement and Repair

From self and others
As I prime my foundation
For a whole being

Neglected, I have been
Neglected, I will be no more

Weaponizing self-care
As an act of Spiritual Warfare

Because self-preservation
Involves quality of life

Essence of being
Auric expression

Duration of Breath
Neglected, no more

Wounded Healer Discovers Her Limitations

There are certain truths that we can only discover for ourselves. Since writing my article in the Fall 2019 edition of *City Voices*, much has been elucidated. Between August and November of 2019, I had met my aspirations and still felt unsatisfied. As I had intended, I applied to Yeshiva University for their Wurzweiler School of Social Work Program. I applied on August 20th, the deadline, and by the 22nd, I had a student identification number. At work, I desired the role of Case Manager, which at the time exclusively required an MSW or Master's degree. Due to the bail reform and expansions within the Supervised Release Program for pretrial services with justice-involved individuals, bachelor's level case management was available. I didn't immediately apply because it was adult-specific and I had a desire to work with young adults, ages 16-24. I was encouraged to apply for the position by my colleagues. It took about two weeks to receive the job offer, with a salary in the mid-50s. I was convinced that I was on my path—The Path—to the perceived greatness I wished to embody.

During my short time at Yeshiva University, an excellent institution, I was introduced to tremendous knowledge and a plethora of theories on human behavior. As a Jew, I was elated to attend Yeshiva, enthusiastic, and enthralled with the newness of it all. I held my professors in high esteem and was very respectful and appreciative of my classmates. I submitted some online assignments and wrote two papers, one a midterm, before withdrawing on November 8th, 2019. Although the papers received A's, I found the process of learning about trauma and healing in an academic institution to be inexplicably triggering and retraumatizing. There was this approach of objective distancing that felt disconnected from the very statistics on the trauma that we studied. I took three classes at Yeshiva. In two of those classes, the professors distributed the Adverse Childhood Experience survey. I have a score of 9. The highest is 10. Of the questions in the survey, domestic violence between my caregivers was never witnessed, but intimate partner violence was very present.

I began to feel too wounded to facilitate the healing of others. Although I had withdrawn from Yeshiva University, I was promoted to Adolescent Case Manager as of November 18th, 2019, ten days after withdrawing from graduate school. I felt confident that if I focused on work and remained committed to my mental health treatment process, along with self-care practices, that I could maintain my work/life balance. This was upheaved when I performed an intake for two young men who were both charged with crimes of sexual violence against young girls. As a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, who is currently naming and owning experiences of abuse that were normalized, I simply could not hold my seat at the table. After much deliberation, I applied for the

Family Medical Leave Act and Short-term Disability as of January 6th, 2020. I write these words in late February, from a ranch in New Mexico, completely uncertain of my future.

Even so, I deeply believe that wounded healers can be exceptional in their ability to encourage and support the personal transformation of their peers. My pride instructed me that I required an MSW and a higher salary to execute such an intention. Humility is a wise teacher. It is not a matter of what you do, but why and how you do it. The creative impact is my intention. I thoroughly enjoy listening and processing and empowering people. My definitive dream is to live off the land, with a farm, in an adobe home, in a sustainable manner, and with the community. Whatever path that is aligned with my values and ethics that can actualize said dream, shall be explored. I intend on being content and graceful. I have faith in the process. This is my journey.

* * * * *

Flash forward to Corona times, Rosh Hashanah is upon us. Between February and September, my life has been full of abundance. I was in London to experience an art exhibit by Genesis Tramaine at the Almine Rech Gallery when the travel restrictions were declared. I recall being seated at a dinner reception after the opening of the art exhibit with Bernard Ruiz-Picasso, who after scrolling through my Instagram post suggested I explore the medium of music. The flight from London to Norway, and finally, back to New York was surreal. I returned to my employer at the end of March. I have been working remotely since that time. I currently have about 30

clients on my caseload and find it very manageable. I have also immersed myself into a community with JFREJ (Jews for Racial and Economic Justice) and Amud: Jews of Color Torah Academy. I am currently enrolled in the Certification in Jewish Ethics and Social Justice at The Jewish Theological Seminary. Additionally, through a membership funded by my employer with SWEET (Supporting Wellbeing through Empowerment, Education, and Training), I am enrolled in two certificate programs: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and Psychotherapy.

Every day I challenge myself to surrender to the present. To do my best and to be most forgiving when I do not meet my own expectations. I have chosen to love myself as though I were my own child and my own mother; the abundance in such a task is life-giving. HaShem loves me, Spirit loves me, and I love me. How could I ever be lost? My path is of my own divining.

“Before we flew in the sky, we crawled in caves. We are on a jungle gym in the multiverse burning faster than we can replenish. When this planet becomes barren, would it have been premature?”

***“Fucking pyramid scheme termed capitalism will
make corporations out of people and
drown the nation with poverty; meanwhile,
corporations and their interest are
lobbied for legally within our Democracy.”***

Digital Dictatorship

If the trans(Atlantic)national slave trade was a
Conspiracy,
What is crypto currency?

When the elite saucer their way to the moon
They'll leave preservatives for our water

Recode the Mainframe

Non-binaristic algorithms
Delete the double helix
Infinitely coded bonds

Femme, Butch, Queer
Trans, Cis, Intersex
I AM LIFE  “say we”

Polarities United
One God
Many Prophets

Amen, Ashe, Amun

Manumission

Commence the capitalist agenda
The Third World we hinder

Democracy we spread
Like a virus on a slice of bread

3/5th a person or currency devaluation
Postcolonial evaluation

Auction a nation
Forbade the reparation

40 acres and a mule
Money is the massa's tool

Indebted countries are sharecroppers
While Americans are addicted shoppers

Black Tongue

Sometimes, speaking with white people about racism
Is like speaking to a rapist about rape

Why would I give you the satisfaction? –I fear.

How do you say terrorism began with imperialism?
Amerika and Israel are engaged in Military Occupation

Genocide is persistent, when people are turned into
weeds
And as the constitution rots, and artificial intelligence
blooms

I ask: when we become the creator,
Can we respect our creator/s?

I'm just saying. Is the mirror so painful?
Psychosis may be illuminating—collectively

Hypothetical Visioning

this rodeo needn't require a chase
your unicorn has found her grace

only the mightiest roar is desired
for my soul seeks to be inspired

I am earth brewing water
craving fire for a slaughter

death and reclamation for rebirth
to declare our truest worth

although I won't run, will you be still?
for the seeds to set, for the next season to till

I ask you now because my soul is fertile
will you be my Lion Kween?

I'll turn your forest into heaven
chakras, one through seven

***“Trauma untreated stunts development; imagine the
flow of a river before the obstruction of a dam.”***

Stars

To my ancestors I confess
I am scared of my own success

The commitment to the path unknown,
Was never written in stone

My dreams are on loan,
I must claim the blood of my bone

I trail behind in greatness
Too meager, and prone to lateness

But this I shall forsake,
Reluctance is a mistake

I will live with zest
Even when depressed

Past traumas, I will no longer suppress,
This I confess

***“A tribe of one, never run—hold your ground;
use your sound.”***

My Nigga, though

I wanted to be your little girl,
I wanted to be your little girl daddy
I wanted to be your little girl
Because you my daddy

I have no memories of you, before April 1st
1997, but what I do have is the worst

I have your fallacies of daddy-hood
Your fake protection from my mother was
misunderstood

Her verbal assaults and belt hook whippings were
mediocre
Your second wife, my step-mother, ditched out torture
like the joker

How I be the first of 8 children and be so lonely?
Never was I a permanent household member, transient
only

What is mutuality when you need a family in every
stranger?
Daddy, you got me out in these streets, impervious to

danger

After a decade of homelessness, been living own my
own for five years
Pops never came, and moms seemed mad I had my own,
so it appears

A house warming gift, or an apology for the struggle
would have been kind
But lord knows, these matters are of a higher design
that the divine designed

I wanted to be your little girl,
I wanted to be your little girl daddy
I wanted to be your little girl
Because you my daddy

Now I want a family, and I'm scared to share my bed
Who can handle the ruminations of my head?

I turn to my elders in the spirit realm
And I ask that they take the helm

I am without parentage, at 30 years of age
I have breeders with sincere intentions, but not one a
sage

Although I have denounced my womb, my heart still
yearns
All these wounds, reinforced steel was a band-aid for
concerns

Suddenly, the restriction of energy through the chakras
feels consequential
Those two primary relationships are most influential

My Nigga, though. I feel violated spiritually
I will accept my fate categorically
But, My Nigga, though.

I wanted to be your little girl,
I wanted to be your little girl daddy
I wanted to be your little girl
Because you my daddy

I am nobody's little girl
This is my fate

Negress Outlaw

Out on the street pulpit,
Of the modern day plantation

Peaking out the globalized cockpit,
I inquire of our collective salvation

Query ye, of thine own path;
For we are promised wrath

Many soothsayers have prophesied warnings;
We are left with too few great mornings

Huddle we, as the cold comes near;
Because we are the future's last frontier

**“Miscarriage or delivery; this planet,
a spiritual distillery.”**

Bounty

Is wealth a justification for waste?
Stripping the unborn from the waist

We are economic pedophiles
Devouring the young with smiles

We pillage without reverberation
Protected by democracy’s legislation

But dearest friend of mine
Have you consented to this design?

Bear in mind, we will be held to account;
For penance knows no discount

**“When the rich and the poor eat off the same plate,
a new world we can create.”**

**“She is but a blade of grass dancing in the wind;
for her, the sun has sinned the soil—her smile, a
coil.”**

Musings

*I am living in my ship
I must make the leap –*

*This corporeality is a whip
Absolution ain't cheap*

From this world to the next,
I am doomed if I remain vexed

It is consciousness I seek;
Contorting my soul to become meek

What world will we inherit,
And whose standard is the merit?

***“Because knowledge is cumulative,
I appreciate the process of aging.”***

Star Baby

Mama Universe, where art thou?
I knew you before, but what of now?

Between the doses, I forget-
‘Am I in spiritual debt?’

Nightmares become threats
The past, an endless cassette

I crouch my soul
The touch to be whole

BEHOLD: One prayer at a time!
Lest faith be a crime

A Gem of the Pleiades

I am walking to the F train in Brooklyn, to head home from the 4th Ave train station, while I smoke a spliff and recollect my raw appetite from the late hours of the 29th night of February. She is face down, ass up and my fingers are curled around her g-spot, as I bite chunks of her ass. Her moaning is so gratifying, like a seamless orchestra to a conductor. Her body is richly melanated, her thighs are thick, her belly soft and round. I am intent on devouring her at this moment. So tight, so moist, the aroma. Just a lick, a sip of a clit. The thirst was real. For a taste of her lips, all of her lips.

Kole, unlike my numerous Tinder dates, is a person with whom I attended Smith College. She was a senior, when I was a first-year. We both resided in Lamont house, on the 4th floor during the mid-2000's. We were cordial during that single overlapping year of study; however, hadn't established a relationship outside of smithiehood. While residing in Manhattan over the past seven years, Kole and I have run into each other at Union Square twice, and once at the Schomburg Museum in Harlem. We were always polite and graceful, but never made an attempt to meet up intentionally. Since graduating in 2011, I hadn't attended a single Smith event. It wasn't until Winter of 2019, when I received a Facebook invitation to the New York Chapter Smith Holiday Party from Kole, that we became reacquainted again. The small talk was pleasant, her presence was enchanting. We exchanged numbers and she was convinced she could link me with a friend of hers, who she believed, I'd take a liking to. I can't precisely pinpoint when the mutual attraction was realized, but there has always been a sense of humor and

sensuality that I associate with Kole. About a week after the Holiday party, Kole invited me to Ginny's Supper Club in Harlem, for a Jazz performance and a salmon entree. The venue was so beautiful and rather romantic. Our conversation was substantial and we broached the topic of dating. She shared a little bit about the matter, and my curiosity grew. Before me, was a beautifully black, assertive and accomplished woman, how could she not be dating? The next hurdle was to learn her sexual orientation. Typically, she responded with, "I like people." As a very fluid person, this was alluring to me. Naturally, I shared with her a little of my dating experiences. We walked separate ways at 125th St. and Malcolm X Blvd. I wanted so badly to invite her over, but knew she was an aged wine, not a wine cooler.

There may have been a text message correspondence, I truly couldn't recall. But Kole sent out an email invitation for showings of Black Women in Film Festival, with dates in January. One happened to be on my birthday, the 30th, and I hadn't made any plans to celebrate. I thought little of reaching out to spend my birthday evening with her. Serendipitously, her late father and I share a birthday. We decided to meet up at 6 pm, at a bar near West 4th to make a toast to her father. She was about forty minutes late, due to her train being stuck underground. Even so, I was still thrilled to share time with her. The bar was packed. She had a single drink on the rocks; I declined to join in, as I was already overly intoxicated from a sushi lunch with my best friend. We made it to the Film Forum and saw a clip that starred Eartha Kitt. It was beautiful. Afterward, we took a couple of pictures, walked to the train and gave each other a rich embrace.

Some time had passed, when I was walking along Riverside Park one morning, on February 14th, and

received a text message from Kole about the upcoming potluck she was organizing. Because I have numerous email accounts, and communicate over several text phone app platforms, I can easily lose track of a correspondence or invitation. In my defense, there were two events, a potluck and a karaoke event, a week apart. After going back and forth with her via text message, on where her invitation might be located on my phone, I immediately RSVP'd for the 22nd at 5 pm. I decided to also RSVP for the Smith Karaoke for the 29th at 3 pm. I arrived at a quarter to 6 to the potluck, bearing half a loaf of bread and two flavors of hummus. I didn't immediately find myself conversing with Kole, as she was the host. The night was rich in food, dialogue and community. By the end of the evening, Kole was hugging me goodbye, in such a way that I began to feel sexually aware of my body. I felt safe and liked it, but was unclear on her intentions. She gave me two twirls before sharing that her friend could drive me uptown from the Queens home we were in. I was grateful, as I had a 6 am flight to New Mexico the next morning.

I visited a ranch in Sapello, New Mexico for a week. There was not a day in which Kole and I did not communicate. I told her that I liked her touch and felt safe, but giddy. I had sent her a short erotica story that I had written my senior year, while attending Smith College. I also shared with her some articles I had written for a niche newspaper on being a Peer Specialist. Something was happening, and we were just flowing. The pictures she would send, and then my versions that I would send in return. I was in the hot tub when we had a video call, which was seductive. We were both eager to gain clarity on what it was we were feeling and doing. I expressed my interest and her rebuttal was promising. By the time I

boarded my return flight to New York on February 28th, Friday evening, I knew I'd see her the following day for Karaoke.

While on the plane, the more I thought of Kole, the more I felt butterflies in my tummy. This was such a new and strange experience. A woman I met 14 years ago, who I barely communicated with during all this time; and suddenly, I can't help but yearn for her touch. Karaoke was a cute event to host. The song selection was not quite for my palate, but I appreciated watching Kole have fun. There was one smithie who both Kole and I were acquainted with, as we all lived in Lamont House on the 4th floor. The last time I saw Abby was at the Smith Holiday Party. Now, at the karaoke venue, we're playing musical chairs around Kole. I was thirsty to have her body beside my own. Frankly, I had bravely sent her some visually seductive material and did not want to overstep my reach. I wanted her to initiate physical contact. And did she. She guided my hand to her lower back. I commenced with rubbing her back in circular motions, amid the Karaoke selections being played. Abby seemed very confused. I was gleefully avoidant of eye- contact.

While in New Mexico, Kole shared with me a house party that was being thrown after the karaoke event by a fellow smithie. From midtown, we took a taxi to the house party in Brooklyn. At this point, the sexual tension was palatable. Honestly, I have deeply desired black and thick love, it's been a source of grief. Although Tinder, Bumble, and Hinge have been excellent in facilitating my connection to potential lovers and friends; the women whom I've met are slender, and not brown or black. It's been challenging and complicated. So during the ride to

the house party, I was in awe of the universe's uncanny orchestration of timing. We arrived at the party, and upon our arrival, we saw a familiar smithie at the entryway; we entered the apartment together. The space was lovely and the display of food was so appetizing; an array of cheese, meats, crackers, wines, etc. It was very laid back and I was feeling very much at ease.

Like magnets attracting an electrical charge, our proximity was very close. The conversation was intimate and felt like necessary emotional labor. It was vulnerable and transparent. Although we were in a room with other folks filled with chatter and drinks, we were much absorbed in our own bubble. I had to say, "I want to kiss you." "Why don't you," she asked. I admitted to some shyness around the space we were in. As a gathering, we began to play What Do You Meme. Perhaps over a dozen rounds, in the midst of such, Kole and I were twisting our fingers together, holding hands, and playing footsie. There were a couple of moments when we left the living room to get more food or drinks from the kitchen. Two bodies passing, she reached for my waist, and I hers. We exchanged two brief soft wet kisses. I may have been exhausted from my return from New Mexico that morning, but her essence was caffeinated sensuality.

We met up in the kitchen about two more times that evening, before deciding to take a taxi to her home. It was a short ride. She initiated the kissing and hand holding along the ride. I enthusiastically reciprocated the affection. She resides on the second floor of an apartment building. Her roommate wasn't there, gratefully. The clothes came off with such grace. While her body rested upon mine, with my arms embracing her being, eyes locked, I felt a sacred energy between us. Because I don't

recall what persona I portrayed while at Smith College, I have felt very uneasy and anxious with that social network. But with my head between her bosoms, as she caresses my forehead, I felt her nurturing touch.

I woke up around 7:46 am, in bed by myself. I lingered for a little, but went searching for Kole. She was comfortably lounging on the couch in the living room, while consuming some cold cereal. She was wearing a robe and her glasses. After I brushed my teeth, I joined her on the couch. The morning small talk was polite. Dating varies by person, but I chose to tell her that my male booty calls can stay on KIK. Because at age thirty- one, I am committed to manifesting a healthy black lesbian love relationship. I was preparing to leave, when she decided to sit on my lap. Her curves, her softness, her eyes, and her full lips. I'm weak. But literally, we both have orthopedic limitations, bad knees; it was fucking endearing and romantic to navigate our bodies with such gentleness and humor.

I don't know what this is. I don't know what this will be. But I have already soaked up so much healing and pleasure. I am grateful to the magic of the universe. To her black pussy and its wetness. May I drink her like a lily does the sun? We are black star seeds in the garden of passion and creation. What can two wombs create in the absence of sperm? A Star System.

***“I am too genuine for this world;
my heart is crippled,
but my mind is stealth.”***

Dear Universe

I have a trunk of suppressed memories to sort— I need
your support!
My little girl is undressing, her history I am addressing.

She is passing, as I rise.
For her, all I know is grief. May she Rest In Peace.

Conundrum

During psychosis, an emotional wildfire erupts
This, my soul requires– my life it interrupts

Like a twisted ankle that stops you from walking,
The rage is homicidal, I am tired of talking!

I was ready to die, if I needed to kill;
The wounds of my childhood have left me ill

Now a woman, still afraid of rape;
The terror holds me captive, no clue how to escape

Although I am a lesbian, I still feel unsafe;
When her skin touches mine, my soul begins to chafe

Woke

Pop Titty–
God Bless Amerika

Almighty, The Great

Just Haldol,
Keeping me straight

Cocooning for the sake
‘Bout to break

***“We humans are a sick species, in need of
spiritualized medicine.”***

My Little Girl

Before I knew time, I was serving a life sentence;
When I was nine, I prayed for repentance

This hole between my legs, the mark of a prey;
The threat of incest lingers to this day!

“Father, how could I be your second wife?
If you EVER came for me, you would have met my
knife!”

Daily contemplations of suicide, at the age of ten;
Wandering the streets of Lagos, searching for God
within

Returning to America, the spiritual warfare concealed;
Overdosing on Motrin, the pain congealed

A carcass enmeshed in flesh, can't she see?
How her words sliced through me: “Still, I ain't free”

These injuries are embedded in my DNA;
Fourteen years later, and I can taste my soul's decay

**“Earth is a cosmic bridge— a narrow sojourn
through the galaxy.”**

**“The soul, like a muscle, when exerted to depletion,
can rip.”**

Clutch

Son, I speak to God;
My spine, her rod!

Goldmine, a manic rush;
Psychosis, the crush

Unwinding cellular memory,
Articulating the summary

***“I broke my soul many times before, like a broken
limb, I cannot bear the weight of my emotional
history—forgive me!”***

Reflection

Abducted at the age of eight;
Nigeria redirected my fate

From foster care, to a group home;
Pain became a frequent comb

Then MICA shelter to Supportive housing—
My life purpose, I’ve been browsing

A life of poverty and contentment—
Mother Earth is dying, I bear no resentment

I am alone, but finally, I have a home;
My dreams for the future have space to roam

Emotional Injury

Many wounds have rewired my head;
Two castles, and I never found a bed

A happy family of one,
My healing has begun

I've known rejection all my life;
We make love because she is my wife

When we are most intimate, I realize—
The longevity of trauma, and seek to minimize

Neurogenesis

as a lily with thorns,
arriving at the zero point field

I blow trauma out my psychic horns
permitting self-preservation to yield

**“Memory will forever be,
no matter my plea to be free.”**

Behold

Unable to turn the tide,
Nor able to hide

I count the days of life,
Consoling my strife

***“I intend to salvage my soul,
with all the willpower I can control.”***

Flush

Scared of touch
The crave, I hush

Blunt to the face
The thickness, a case

Chubby is a deflection
Psychic protection

I am that little girl!
“Mommy, where were you?”

Shh—she never came!
Nor did her remorse

Down the drain:
Drip.
Drip.

Colored Folks

Open doors to every school
Our wombs were their tool

They used to breed us
Now they teach us

How fortunate are our minds
Do you feel the binds?

We were lynched with rope
Now we bathe in hope

The cords of the past we trip
When white supremacy is hip

Cleanse

as we wash our souls,
in earth's bowls

the mother race,
our origins we retrace

our fellow races we parent,
no matter how aberrant

anticipating our cosmic communion;
redemption for reunion

Afterlife

I make homage to the present
A happy peasant

Knowing for sure
The trickery of the lure

Content with poverty
Emancipated property

And before my transition
Spirit, I commission

I pay my dues
Failure, I refuse

Forestalled glory
Living my earth story

Invoice

Bill slavery,
It's savory

Outsource labor,
Just a neighbor

Harvest the earth,
She got girth

Rupture the future,
Owe it a suture

***“The seeds of psychological insurrection will permit
our spiritual resurrection; hitherto, we are a mere
reflection of circumspection.”***

Supper

‘Not a jockey, but I’ll play hockey
Word to my mother, Nagasaki

Who Columbus? “pass the hummus”
A fellow on the syllabus

I hope you failed the class
Truly, the wicked amass

Pescatarian, “no turkey please”
Schools propagate psychological unease

Master oneness with the Universe
Fathom it a spiritual intercourse

Give thanks to literacy
For few, it is a voracious delicacy

False Parentage

I mourn the future when I read of the past;
The miseducation of First World peoples leaves me
aghast

Disbarring the mental shackles to liberate my psyche;
The implementation of such is spiky

A lesbian African-American by identification,
But a melanated omnisexual androgyne by association

To what nation do I owe my patriotism,
When I can no longer indulge senile romanticism?

***“I welcome death; from henceforth,
I worship with every breath.”***

Magi

a Buddha without a monastery,
a witch born from a cemetery

connecting memories like a puzzle;
the tree of life, I nuzzle

a medicine woman pitching water,
a lamb before slaughter

**“Pampered by the Universe,
its abundance is my recourse.”**

Stomping Ground

Earth, the playpen of angels;
Lighting tunnels with jewels

A passage through many worlds;
Graded by a speck of eternity

***“how slavery belabors my soul;
sleep stole, the hour a toll.”***

Vociferous

We Black women nurse the burden
Of mothering, without comparison, every trace of
melanin

Our universal existence is an affront to white
supremacy;
From genuine love, we procure medicine and therapy

It is we who harbor the remedy
To lynch hegemony

***“Under a true Democracy, voting should be a desired
mandate; anything less, ought to experience an
immediate castrate.”***

Sistah Nations

Oh Great Britain, how the love swells;
With your language laminated upon my tongue, I cast
these spells:

Amerikah – the greatest of colonies
Mercy, Mercy! Many apologies!

In the geopolitical arena of sanctity,
Our foremost brother behaves savagely

I's in the trenches, examining pathologies;
Socioeconomic progress, many are comedies

We will no longer rise as countrymen
against a great evil;
For it is man's duty to address his
own psychological upheaval

Tools

protection or projection,
fear detection

feminine passivity,
intelligent sensitivity

Reception

You cannot bear judgement without experience;
A child of sea and sky, I am serious

With every keyboard stroke,
My destiny, I invoke

I swear on the flesh I bear,
One day, I will meet you there

Engima

The Prison Industrial Complex,
A White Supremacist hex

Capitalism the curse;
Compliance, we coerce

It's mechanisms are vague,
A planetary plague

The illness beheld;
It's treatment withheld

Whitehouse

a nigga had first chair,
but he ain't have blonde hair

sister calm down,
our equality gave you a frown

Erotic Indulgence

Don't mind being rode,
A sensual episode

Join me, as I unload;
I seek to explode

***“Heed the word before the sword;
have you heard the lord?”***

Crazy

Visions smell like gravy
Call it Bipolar, I's wavy

A bit moody, you judge unduly
I ain't looney, just fruity

In my mind's eye, I watch a movie
Won't live to eighty, the theme spooky

To the sun I am baby, yet a lady
Sometimes I act shady, a matter of safety

Hussle daily, can't afford to be lazy
Do or die, I say maybe and act hasty

Submit

My spine was split,
Injury leeching my wit

Now I's lit,
Ready to commit

Snitch

Dream conferences on the issue at hand
I's a mermaid dusting off sand

Time and space have been interrupted
The soul of man corrupted

Sending transmissions to all witches
Come forth, only the baddest of bitches

We gotta coil spells into lyrics
Fuck the critics and the cynics

We modern day mystics
Metaphysics, trust your instincts

Yesterday's hieroglyphics,
Tomorrow's linguistics

Daydreaming

Apron on, skillet frying reason
Picking the analogy to match the season

I's a proverbial line cook
Observing how wisdom is undercook

A world trampled by children;
I be in the kitchen, watching the affliction

The Magician's Temple

Uncloak your veil,
We reside in jail

Grasp the Holy Grail,
Lest your soul remain stale

Unease

There is no cord to span the sky,
Nor a singular voice on the receiver

Off of madness, I am high
My soul in fever

Overcome by the wails of the unborn
From my disposition, I am torn

A volcano rattles my groins
Why do I bear these loins?

I am a delirious bushwoman
On a payphone with the moon

Unlimited reception, I swoon

Dah Nasty

sodomy, the back alley
pussy a valley

rain the finale
in love, may we rally

An Eight

Intergalactic delegation
Pondering intervention

I's a representative
Predicament is tentative

Cosmic witness
Earth, a litmus

Slumber

Forty-four stories high, off a balcony
I realize the majesty of fantasy

Skin a tapestry, dancing with gravity

Report

The situation of my divine probation
Is the summation of a cosmic operation

My vibration has been on vacation
Saturation is the designation, NOT destination

My salvation is in gestation
Reformation is my occupation

Desolation is a sensation
Migration in synchronization

Every violation has an expiration
Star Federation is my affiliation

The toleration of energetic oscillation
Is the education of divination

Preservation is the domain of creation
When oration becomes a citation

The Cradle

I rock my womb,
To steady the gloom

A seed has grown to die;
I wash my hands with lye

Ropes

Double-dutching through economic enslavement
I summon Spirit, my back to the pavement

We fit to jolly these chains
To the day our brittle bones rest on canes

As long as the sky and the sea breathe,
Within our veins, revolution will seethe

Seer

I's a missionary living off commissary
Celestial Military—writing my own obituary

I'll leave commentary, it's evolutionary
A mercenary contemplating a planetary funerary

The gift is hereditary, the cost extraordinary
The story may vary, but I remain unwary

**“When doors become curtains,
the ceiling is a window.”**

Capitulation

There is an ocean within my heart
Swallowing trauma, tasting tart

With an IUD bracing my uterus as a chastity belt
And stretch marks for battle scars, I melt

Although I receive commands from the dead,
I weave the path I tread

I am grandma severing blood ties
Spiritual ecstasy is the prize

I clock maritime, the future will be sublime
I am owed for I have paid with time

Exhumation

1898 or 2092,
A Naija Jew

My mother's tongue, I spew
I speak many centuries of voodoo

Out from the gutter, I rise
My arrival, I apprise

Star Family Reunion,
An Earthly Communion

**“When forgiveness does not erase memory,
the remorseless mock misery.”**

Episodic

my unconscious spat on me,
when I stabbed the sky

broken, with wounded knee
a cargo of lies to un-buy

Capitalism: 101

a global pyramid scheme,
the riches flow upstream

hand to mouth, we live our lives
to money, we are sold wives

Fallen

From the sky, I skied into the ocean
Shambles of dust gathered like mud

Seaman on watch, surveying the debris
Fishing for a former-self to slaughter

Psychosis

Telepathic enumerations
Ballistic incarnations

Relay communication
Monologue recitation

Waking sleeper-cell
Certain of hell

Earth explorer
Mental horror

Haldol for dollhouse
Cage and mouse

Neither Sheep, Nor Ram

Black Virgin, born anew and bare
Dragging through a wilderness of fear

On better days,
I pinch the sky, when I cross my legs;
and tickle the ocean with my breath

Psychological dismemberment
Surrendered degenerate

The latter of those days,
I am my own in-patient with a studio-apartment;
Introspective cavity search of every compartment

Today, I pray
May time delay

***“Some of us are too close to the sun,
to not know the difference.”***

Intramuscular Shot

To the womb of this nurse,
Bracing my arm, I spit this verse

Little one, take your time
Real soon, you'll know how to climb

Many ladders will be presented
But never shall your soul be rented

To your guardians, I simply say:
"For this one, be ready to slay"

**"When the sky is dry,
why should the soil suffer?"**

My Dearest

Because dreams are power point projections encoded
with directives, the mission will be perpetually
unknown. Therefore, I write postcards to my future self,
to preserve the relics of my resurrection.

And as long as your body is your home, dwell into the
world with questions. Because no answer can deter the
pursuit of knowledge and its objective for truth, worry
not. And when fear becomes a barrier, remember life is
the gift of alchemy.

***“Crops rise from tears,
but do stars have ears?”***

Rankine File

Who Jesus be?
I know what I hear.
But what do you see?

How many negroes they don' hung?
Never have I heard freedom's bell.
My Brother, whose anthem have you sung?

Unraveling

plucking ink off paper
the protagonist and creator

gallivanting between frequencies
echoing the tremble of deities

ripping pages into books
narration delivered in hooks

***“Make time to build the higher
columns of your mind.”***

Say AGAIN!

I am a living VooDoo Doll

You ask me where I came from
I say: “What are you drinking?”

How you have mouth to speak?
Confounded!

And if you claim this your house,
Where did the steel come from?

Be Easy

time is a turntable
certainty unstable

project or deflect
energy we collect

cipher your soul
life on parole

Time Capsule

never been slaughtered,
am I goat or man

the same tears
slide down my cheeks

without a grain to sacrifice,
I am undying a dozen deaths

the same cry
rains between my lips

Quantum Tunneling

I've shattered a thousand times;
My self, left in the blind

Cradling several celestial crimes,
To translation I am enshrined

“Cursed with a gift, my spirit knows no thrift.”

Hatching

born a runaway,
with my soul to lay

as I move into my body,
the procession is rowdy

one of none;
I have just begun

Broadcasting

When we do kill,
Know your borders

Run for Hill;
Last orders

Catnip and Whiskers

extra sensory perception
demonic contraception

emotional capitalism
psychic terrorism

Crystal Babies

amphetamines and church tambourines
bud sweet like tangerines

it started in our teens
long legs scheming

hormones streaming
little girls dreaming

S&M Experiment

White fire and blue light
A single knight for the fight

White Supremacy versus racism
The vigor of sadism over escapism

Say my name, say my name
Unconditional love knows no shame

Decoy

African Royalty,
Eternal loyalty

Earth Sciences,
Unspoken alliances

Last of a kind,
Heart set to grind

Libertas

Follicles are an antenna;
The retina a speaker box

Marking skin like henna;
Woven receptors in dreadlocks

**“Diving out the hive,
last tribe on overdrive.”**

Red Nose, 1977

Psychic chain reaction
Omega time infraction

Adult-Child Auction

Warrior contingency redaction
Interdimensional interaction

Grape

The seed or the fruit;
“You’re cute!”

Student or brother?
Same mother

Shutter eye;
“I die!”

A loaf of bread,
The infection spread

Kidnap

Solar Dynasties,
Secret Societies

biological requirements;
psychic predators

The Ring of Fire,
Spiritual Barbwire

Forgery

The doll was a dog;
Paper-made joy

Enzyme transference;
A successful date

Forerunner

A pint of honey, before incarnation
Our kisses left an imprint

A lost hymen, castrate every nation
Our bee's horizon, follow the scent

“The pest of incest, termites of the flesh.”

Whole Foods

I met the future on a grocery receipt
She gave me a paper cut, but it was sweet

Before I tore her to pieces
I wrote her a thesis

Titled: “*The Excavation of My Soul*”
The last berry I ever stole

Lucid Overdose

Vocational correlations
Galactic emanations

Pharmacology and toxicology
Hematology or mythology

Varicose strains
Neuropathic chains

Individualized federations
Temporal reparations

Unmourned

Between my arms,
I rock my little girl

For she has been killed

Buck, Bucking, like a Bitch

“Sex does not pose a threat to the free world,” she says sarcastically. A striking sentiment, stated by Dr. Aileen Cullen. I lie in bed wide awake at four in the morning, in my Smith College dorm. It is winter term, and I’ve become a slave to Google in search of anything that will bring me closer to her. I discover a locally produced radio program, airing her segment, “It’s only sex.”

In her slapstick manner, she promotes sex liberation: “Take the power from the genitals. Don’t be afraid of sex, yawl. It’s only sex! People don’t spend a lot of time talking about actual blood and gut sex!”

Maybe, but she has made me think of nothing but sex. Her voice is soothing, guiding me to a tranquil place inside myself. I begin to rub my stomach and trace the hairs under my belly button.

“Even sex itself could be mediocre or bad sometimes, but teaching about sex is almost always fabulous.”

I ponder: Are her teachings confined to the classroom with projectors and PowerPoints? Might she offer one-on-one lessons that feature a blindfold, bound hands, chains, and a bullwhip popping across my back?

Contemplations of the most deviant kind possess my mind. I slowly track my hairs from tummy to pubis and find a moist sea shuddering between my thighs. My quivering body pulsates, orgasmically. Fingers dance from below my waistline over my torso greeting my firm breasts and hard nipples with tight pinches.

“I am Aileen, and I am a sex nerd,” she declares.

My fingers swirl around my collar bones and lead to my lips. I trace the contour of my upper lip and rest my index finger upon my philtrum. My pouting lips usher my fingers in, as I have begun to salivate.

She concludes her segment: “It’s only sex!”

My fingers are sweet. I gasp in selfish delight.

I am drunk off my own cum.

* * * * *

It was lunchtime in Lamont’s house, on a gorgeous October afternoon, when Jess repeatedly poked me and demanded I reveal an erotic craving. Although I was unsure if she wanted to know because she wanted to be the object of this craving, as she had unsuccessfully invited me to bed with her on several occasions, or if she was just curious. I was unable to resist her pleas; I shared my fantasy affair with Dr. Cullen. As anticipated, Jess derived much amusement from my late night spent with Dr. Cullen’s voice pounding my pussy.

She remarked: “Xiomara, what the fuck is wrong with you?”

“A sister can’t dream,” I angrily replied out of shame.

“Dude, you were masturbating to her voice. That is some psychotic shit!”

“You’re such a drama queen. Voices are sexy. Her voice is sexy. It made me want to fuck myself. It’s really not that complicated!” I dug in my school bag in search of my day planner.

“Well, if she happens to get a stalker or receive anonymous letters, I will put your ass on blast.” I was certain Jess wanted her voice to guide me to climax; I patted her shoulder with compassion.

“Always gotta bust a sister’s dreams.” We smiled and picked at our food.

“Xio, that was real-time. Not a fantasy or a dream. You actually fucked yourself while listening to her talk about sex. You know what, whatever. I’d rather fuck twenty-year-olds than dream about being fucked by a thirty-year-old.”

I exhaled and scratched my head out of frustration. “You see... small minds... anyway.” I redirected the conversation. “Can you find me a twenty-year-old? Regrettably, I have become a slave to fantasy because the inability to fuck her has threatened my right to sanity. Dude, I don’t know if I can bear another insomniac night of Dr. Cullen phantom fucking.”

Bearing a raised right eyebrow above her thinly framed, leopard-patterned reading glasses, she asked: “Xiomara, aren’t you seeing Ryan?”

I flippantly responded, “Yeah... she’s an eighteen-year-old Vermonter who has one brother, two parents and lives in a huge house. And she’s white. You can be middle class and you can be white, but the combination is stifling. She has led a sheltered and privileged life, similar to most of the

Smith population. Even so, I can't bear being the lens through which she discovers realities assumed to be fiction. I am not her six-hundred-page non-fiction hardcover on a corner table at Starbucks with Venti Mocha in hand. She hasn't a clue what being parentless and homeless feels like, for which I am glad; nevertheless, I silence parts of myself because I don't want her to feel uncomfortable."

We sat in silence. Jess stabbed me with her eyes. Not knowing what to do or say I stared at the ceiling fan until she said: "I don't know why you're seeing her. She's sweet but that's obviously not enough for you. You consistently pursue these go-happy girls who have no depth and then resent them for being simple. If you desire intense and complicated women who are insightful intellectuals, leave the Goldie Locks alone."

Honesty is healthy, but the truth is raw. I sipped my orange juice and observed the rambunctious crowd.

I felt guilty. Was I cheating on Ryan, I wondered? Personally, monogamy is not particularly my forte, nor is it necessarily, an aspiration; however, I have found myself in a committed relationship and my attraction for Cullen is greater than I'd ever alluded to.

"But am I cheating ...technically?" I asked, with hesitation.

"Xiomara, you can't possibly be cheating. Ryan knew you wanted to be a single woman. Plus, she knew you had your eyes on Dr. Cullen since late August." She picked up her glass of water and gulped loudly, then carried on: Seriously, Ryan is a first-year. She barely knows how to swallow properly, never mind retaining sociological theories. She's learning how to be a big dyke on campus. You are so past that shit." Her mouth stuffed with lettuce,

she continued: “May I also state that we’re human! We desire people. Now and again, we are consumed by desire, which is healthy. But you must determine whether nurturing this desire is feasible, and if so, worth pursuing?”

Hmm, I guess Jess is right. Ryan is a lovely girl but I can’t help but close my eyes and substitute her face with that of Dr. Cullen’s when she lays her tongue on my clit. Just last night, when Ryan fucked me doggy style with her pink, eight-inch dildo and cherry leather strap-on, I was transported back to a workshop Dr. Cullen led on female orgasms and could hear her shouting: “Breath, keep on Breathing. Don’t stop breathing!”

I ought to end this senseless affair with Ryan, but her Amazonian frame has become too familiar.

* * * * *

My eyes first undressed Dr. Cullen on August 22, 2008, while I was working as a receptionist in Clark Hall. The newly-appointed Director of College Health, she was carrying boxes around barefoot with an awful gash on her left shin. She took breaks in the front of the office to catch her breath and rehydrate. I was conveniently positioned six feet from the water machine, staring at my fingernails when she entered. She stomped in breathing heavy, snatched a cone, and filled it with water. She then placed her buttocks on the headrest of the couch, which backed the front office window, and positioned her left foot on a seat cushion and the other on the right-side armrest. She radiated magnetic

and mysterious energy; I couldn't help but gawk at her. My chin slowly turned toward the clock, it was only 11 A.M.

She came and went every twenty minutes. On her fourth round, she got chatty with an assistant.

"Is this what she does?" Dr. Cullen asked.

"I think the Dean has a poor sense of time management," replied Janet.

"That's forgivable, but a fourth cancellation is blasphemous."

With a faint smile, Janet said, "I wouldn't even think about the meeting. You'll meet her eventually!"

"I would care less if I didn't wear suits to meet her, only for it to be canceled," said Cullen, contemptuously.

Janet returned to her office, and I suddenly became the center of Cullen's attention. But, as was typical, was too busy ogling her body to notice. My eyes made their way back up, to be locked in a staring match. Her eyes demanded I release mine from studying her body. I resented her for this instruction.

* * * * *

The fall semester came too quickly. I hadn't made a lasting impression on Cullen. In my mind, she remained barefoot and wobbled like the seabirds in *March of the Penguins*.

Her body swayed with the carelessness of a six-year-old. I initially thought she was either reckless or oblivious. On the contrary, I later learned she was well-versed in social norms and consciously didn't give a fuck. She hardly spoke, but her presence was deafening. I was determined to discover her mystery.

I became a student in need of her astute advice. I was having issues keeping my executive board in check. Although I am a born leader, I am uncertain if I was destined to lead.

On a cool afternoon the week before autumn break, I entered her office. The walls were bleak. There were a few books scattered on the bookshelves. And many little stress-free toys were placed haphazardly on the shelves and floor.

Before I completed my assessment of her office, she started with: "Why are you having issues with your executive board?"

I was seated in her office on a couch better suited for mid-afternoon naps than open office hours. I wore a yellow v-neck t-shirt, which revealed my cleavage, and a tattoo draped under my collar bone that read "Speak your truth even if your voice shakes." I answered, "It's just that people who have graduated are still trying to be in control. The former Chair emailed people urging them to attend the first meeting. They were encouraged to run for positions on the executive board and chair committees. No biggie, but she overstepped her role as an alumna by interfering with matters that no longer pertain to her. I'm just not sure if I will be respected and seen as the 'Chair' if this alumna keeps poking her head in."

She candidly asserted, “You should have a sit-down with your executive board and get everything hashed out. Doubt is contagious.”

I nodded. “Yeah, I agree.” Glad to be in her company, I didn’t hear a thing she said after that. I simply absorbed her essence.

The small talk helped me prowl for an extra ten minutes. I sought to understand her, and I knew I had to keep going to her office.

My visits became a weekly occurrence. At first, it was about my poor leadership skills as the chair of Sistah’s of Lorde, the queer women of color organization, and quickly became about ensuring a weekly dose of her magnetic charm in my life. My visits lasted an hour on average. Greedy as could be, I complained that four office hours a week were too few.

During an unproductive day, preceding a bi-yearly mental breakdown, I walked into her office holding all the rains of spring behind my eyelids.

I cleared my throat, convinced it would expose my pains: “Dr. Cullen, some days I am overwhelmed by the thought. I understand that thinking is healthy and most necessary in our present society, but the revelations are agonizing.”

Puzzled, she repeated, “Revelations are agonizing?” I smiled, nervously. “What do you mean by that,” she asked, with squinting eyes.

“I apologize; I have a habit of saying lots of nothing.” I smiled and rolled my eyes, feeling silly.

“Smith has made me realize how deep my insecurities lie. I am not talking about my hair texture, complexion, or body weight. I am talking about being a queer black woman.”

I took a deep breath and lowered my gaze to the burgundy carpet.

I raised my head: “I used to think all whites dreamed of setting my lynched body on fire. I was certain all men wanted to fuck me—face down and booty up. And a long time ago, I knew they’d make a Matthew Sheppard out of me.”

She anxiously stared in wonderment, “Okay... has that changed?”

“Yes! I have weaved those insecurities into strengths.”

I chuckled. “But when the girl two doors to my right has a 2009 Benz and the girl one door to my left has a summer house in Martha’s Vineyard, I feel cheated by humanity. When my checking account balance is in the negative about once a month, I beg for tears. But crying is a luxury.”

Perplexed by the different lives we are sentenced to, I laughed.

“Poverty is a bitch,” she said, almost mockingly. “Waiting for food stamps to get powdered milk and shopping at the Salvation Army when you’re five years old takes a toll on your soul.”

Bewildered, I gasped, “Really?”

She answered, “I grew up poor Xiomara,” and straightened her blouse. “I am seated in this office, as the Director of

College Health, because I have a Ph.D. in Health Behavior and Human Sexuality. However, my first doctoral degree provided the intellectual curiosity necessary to expect more from the world: **P**overty, **h**unger, and **D**ark nights without electricity.”

Speechless, I scrambled to construct a thought, “I don’t know how you evaded the pains of poverty, but it is the incurable cancer of my soul.”

She sat upright and wrapped her hair around her right ear: “It takes time. Being at Smith College will make the time a lot shorter.” Suddenly, she jumped up and ran to her whiteboard calendar.

“Sorry, Xiomara. I always feel like I am missing a meeting. As we were saying ... you may have been born into poverty but you shape your destiny. You have to form a solid foundation within yourself. The poverty of the soul is an inescapable affliction. Make sure your head is right and your soul is strong.”

As I sat on a couch two feet too close to the ground, I found camaraderie in her. Yes, she was a thirty-one-year-old white woman with a Ph.D. Momma never told me someone of her kind would understand lasting pains. I didn’t know whites felt the aches of empty cupboards and no hot water the way I did.

My attraction for Cullen changed from intrigue to infatuation. Her mystique was alluring but her mind was captivating.

* * * * *

“Do you want it on CNN? Are you going to vote? Presidential elections are in a week,” asked Ryan in her failed attempt at playfulness. I ignored her and shrugged my shoulders as I unstrapped my bra.

As anticipated we began a routine, meaningless, conversation about the day’s events. I began: “How was practice, Ryan?”

She massaged her biceps. “You know... the usual sore muscles and hilarious Mel. I fucking love that girl so much.”

“I’m glad to hear it!”

She continued, “Mel is convinced the coach has a crush on me!”

“No, way,” I shouted, in disbelief.

“Yup,” she responded.

I remained silent, then blurted: “That must be exciting? She watches you run, lift and sweat. She must be *cumming* beside herself!”

“Very funny, got any more jokes, health queen?” She laughed and pulled the green king-size comforter up to her tummy.

“Excuse me? I know you didn’t just say ‘health queen’?”

“I did it! It’s not my fault you’re crushing on some thirty-year-old woman who probably doesn’t even know you like her.” She sucked her teeth.

“Am I detecting jealousy?” I asked jokingly. I then said, “You know I can’t have her, right?” Although I didn’t believe this, she found it comforting.

“I know.” She slipped her right hand under my tank top and rubbed my left breast. “That’s what you say after you tell me how much you want her...I often think you are convincing yourself that she’s unattainable.”

“So you think I can,” I asked.

Hoping to resolve the tense energy, I performed for her. I smiled. I laughed. I tickled her and resented the stars for hiding the sun. When dawn peeked through the curtains, she yawned: “My, my, my, perhaps it’s about that time?”

I smiled, “Is that so? O.K. Hun, sleep tight.” I kissed her on the cheek and turned over to my side of the king-size bed, where I could breathe freely. I was welcoming dawn’s silence when she blurted: “Tonight was hysterical, and she so knows!”

“Sleep tight, yourself, hun,” she said, and simultaneously smacked my ass.

I giggled, adjusted my body, and let the swooshing sheets speak on my behalf.

Ryan was referring to the Sistah’s of Lorde meeting, at which Dr. Cullen facilitated a discussion on “Power Dynamics in Relationships.” The meeting was open to all queers.

* * * * *

Although she was quite long-winded, she was witty and very informative. She started by introducing herself: “I am Aileen Cullen, the Director of College Health. I am new to Smith and absolutely love it here! Tomorrow will mark six months here for me.” She smiled ear to ear.

“Before we get started, is there anything you would like to know about me?” she inquired.

My ears perked up. I wished I had the guts to ask her if she would fuck me over a three-course meal, a bottle of Yellowtail Riesling wine, and keep her strap-on tight...

Luckily, another student came feverishly close to asking my question. “Dr. Cullen, would you ever date a student?”

Her face turned pinkish, she sat up in her chair and countered: “Nope!” I was surprised by her response. It lacked the forcefulness expected from a woman of her caliber.

Swiftly rephrasing the question, “Well, what if the student graduated?”

She cunningly responded, “Possibly.” The temperature must have risen by at least ten degrees because I had to take my jacket off. The room was overcome by laughter and clapping.

No less than twenty seconds after the clapping died down; I looked to my right and caught Ryan eyeballing me. She knew I was fascinated by Dr. Cullen. Her eyes sang a ballad of betrayal and loss. She invaded my cerebration and interrupted my fantasy. Like a chubby kid caught hiding a Twix bar under their pillow, I felt denied the little joys of life.

Bemused by this inaudible exchange, I let out an uncouth yelp. To which Dr. Cullen retorted, “What was that?” As though my yelp were the product of an inside joke she sought to expose.

Incapable of collecting myself or realizing that there were thirty other people in the room, I exclaimed with guilt: “Something bit me.” I rested my right hand around my neck to authenticate my claim.

An inexplicably awkward moment followed. I suddenly felt like I stepped in shit and reeked of something atrocious. The stares felt like darts saying, “Dumb ass, I know what you’re thinking”.

I endured by promptly returning to my polished seated posture and focusing on the orange walls. My coping mechanism was successful until Dr. Cullen decided to role play.

“Okay ladies, you must remember that you cannot give someone what they do not already have. As a partner, I am a mirror reflecting my lover to him/herself. Do you follow?”

The energy was lacking. It was eight-thirty p.m. on a Thursday evening. In college life, that means pregame or nap-time.

I watched the crowd watch her, their eyes blind to the magnificence I felt.

“If I,” she said and carefully scanned the room, “we’re in a relationship with....” she looked dead at me, “Xiomara, she is not responsible for my happiness.”

I folded my legs and straightened my eyeglasses. My heart blasted in my chest. I maintained my poise by nodding in response.

She continued, “Every time Xiomara hangs out with her college friends I get jealous and accuse her of cheating on me. Is she responsible for my insecurities and inability to trust her?” She looked around the room, in an effort to make eye contact and shouted, “No!”

“There is nothing Xiomara can do to make me trust her. Sooner or later, Xiomara will become frustrated when constantly confronted with my insecurities after a night out with her friends.”

I smirked. We stared at each other from across the room. I felt something striking.

* * * * *

I am in a bar wearing black skinny jeans, a red flannel shirt, and blue chucks. I am seated at a table in the corner under fluorescent lighting with a bottle of champagne. I am seated on a chic black leather couch. I examine my surroundings,

and see a backward sign, it says PIV. The music is banging. I'm chilling when a woman's voice startles me.

"Hey, you," she says.

"Me?" I ask.

"No, your champagne," I smile. "Yes, you, Xiomara, right?"

"Yes. And you're Dr. Cullen?" She scoots over to me.

"You can call me Ail. What brings you here tonight?"

"Dreams for something fun."

"Dreams?" she asks. Her hand brushes my left thigh.

"Hun, it's a bar with liquor and music." She touches my bottom lip with her left thumb.

"You don't need dreams here. Just have another drink and make shit happen."

As she reaches for the bottle of champagne, her chest leans into mine. I feel her soft breast against my own. I am intoxicated by her scent.

"Excuse me?" I stutter, in skepticism.

"No need to dream, you make your destiny." She pats my knee.

I smile awkwardly and scope out the bar. I can't make out any faces. But I see at least three hundred people dancing.

A gorgeous go-go dancer passes by when Ail asks, “Would you like to dance?”

“Me?” I ask, sipping my drink and diverting my eyes.

She pulls her hair back and exhales, “Okay, Can I call you Xio?”

“Sure,” I respond and cross my right leg over my left. I move my body closer to hers and rest my left arm over her shoulders.

“Do you see anyone else in this corner?” I look to my right and then my left. There is no one within ten feet of us.

I sheepishly answer, “No.”

“Just checking, Dance?” Her left hand fondles my neck.

“Please...” I respond, as my right-hand grips her inner right thigh.

We make our way to the center of the dance floor. As we approach a vacant patch of floor space, “Can’t Believe It” by T-Pain is roaring from the speakers. The bass guides our bodies. I look into her eyes, then at her lips. And back to her eyes. She grins and licks her lips. I seize her waist. Our bodies clash.

I slide my right thigh between her legs. Our breasts smash into each other. Hips grinding slowly, we maintain eye contact. With my right hand supporting her upper back and left hand squeezing her right ass cheek, I whisper into her right ear: “Sweaty bodies are sexy!”

“What was that?” she asks.

“Nothing,” I remark.

“Something about sweaty bodies...”

I put on a demure smile, “Yes, sweaty bodies are sexy.”

“Is that so?”

Annoyed by her question, I nod dubiously, “Ya!”

“Well, in order for us to get sexy, we have to get sweaty!”

“Okay, let’s dance harder,” I suggest.

“Umm..., I suppose. But I think dancing may take too long to reach the proper sweaty-sexy plateau.”

“What do you suggest, Ail?”

“I have a place five minutes from here. My music won’t be up to par, but I can compensate”

She said *compensate*, where’s the lube at!

I smile and reach for her hand as she heads for the door. All the signs are backward in this place. From what I can make out, the club is called: ZMAERD.

She pulls out her keys and clicks something and in a matter of seconds, we’re at her doorstep. Tipsy and delirious, I am in bliss.

As she unlocks her door, I ask: “Did you catch the name of that club?”

She laughs and bats her eyelashes, “Yea, it’s one of those things you *submit* to, Dreamz.”

“Thanks,” the door opens. We enter her apartment.

The room is too dark for me to identify my surroundings. I find my way to a seat by the fireplace.

“How’s Smith?” she asks, with the reflection of sizzling flames burning in her eyes.

“It’s a great place to be!” I unbutton my flannel shirt.

We share seductive glances, she asks: “Do you have a girlfriend?”

She pours a glass of wine. I feel her tugging at the collar of my shirt, as we drink.

“Me?”

“Again?” she yells, lightheartedly.

Embarrassed, I apologize. “Sorry. No, I do not have a girlfriend. And you?”

“Uh, umm, that’s not your place. Baby girl, I ask the questions and you answer.” She snatches my chin.

“Is that so?” I ask, in awe of her.

Her head turns. She looks at a wooden door. The breeze is full of the smell of her hair. It engorges my nostrils.

I lean forward to take my flannel shirt off when she begins to walk away.

I cry, “Hey!”

I notice she’s taking her clothes off, piece by piece.

She drops her watch.

Then, kicks off her left shoe... followed by the right one.

She unhooks her belt. It slithers off her body.

She tears at her pantyhose.

Her cashmere sweater is ripped off.

And she tosses her brassiere.

I sit, mouth ajar, drooling. I watch the bra crash into the hardwood floor when she looks at me; with her middle and index finger in accord, she signals: come hither.

I become frantic... I begin an internal dialogue. “FUCK...”

I stand up. I begin to walk.

“Fuck how did this happen?”

I see a window frame. But in place of glass, there are bricks. They are identical to the surrounding brick walls. I feel safe.

I progress into her room.

“FUCK! I’m about to fuck. FUCK!” My pussy quakes in anticipation.

I arrive. She is ass booty naked, licking her juices off her fingers. Her beautiful pale skin is glowing. My pussy swells with wetness.

Finally, I say: “Cuuu—mmmmmming,” as I stand in front of her.

She sits on the bottom edge of the bed, on top of white silk sheets, with legs spread. Her lips peak through her fur.

She orders me to: “Drop ‘em”

No questions. No hesitation. I obey her. I am wearing my beater, sports bra, and mismatched socks.

“What is your favorite part of a woman’s body? Don’t be cliché: pussy, ass, and tits are predictable.”

I take my time to answer her question. I redress and undress her curvaceous body with my eyes. “I’d have to say fingers.”

She gets off the bed and moves towards me. She is standing three inches in front of me. I feel the heat of her breath on my lips.

“Fingers?” she moans. I taste the syllables.

I attempt to kiss her, but she bites my bottom lip.

“Impatient. Are we?” She mocks me.

My knees buckle in delight. I taste iron and throb for more. I stare blankly, waiting for her next move. She pulls on my lips with her fingers. They enter my warm mouth. One at a time: Index finger.

“You better fuck like a bonobo,” she stresses.

Middle finger: “rabbit-fucking won’t earn you any mercy.” She glides her fingers over my tongue.

Ring finger: “I hope you have an appetite for pussy.” She grips my lower jaw. I press my teeth into her knuckles.

Lastly, the pinky: “because I want to let a flood out tonight.” With all four fingers in my mouth, I proceed to suck the flesh off her hand.

Before I could assure her that she would experience torrential rains erupting from her pussy: she grabs my elbows, pulls my arms behind me, and bound my wrists with her hands.

“Xio, I will not let you free until I cum a river”

“Up,” she orders me to raise my arms.

“Let’s put you in your place,” she laughs under her breath and holds my arms above my head. Then turns me around, thrusting my body into the wall, my breasts suffocate yet withstand the cold solid surface.

“This isn’t playhouse sweetie. SPREAD ‘em!” I spread my legs wider.

Her right hand keeps my arms erect and held above my head, and her left-hand strokes my clit. She’s doing a good job, but I’d prefer to cum before daybreak.

I shout, “If you want to cum a river, you better twirl that finger like a tornado.”

She assumes failure and works hard to regain her psychological dominance. She decorates my right cheek with kisses, as my left cheek lays flat against the brick wall. Her fervent kisses travel around my neck and throw me into hypnosis. Kisses turn into bites. Not tiny bites, either. She becomes a ravenous woman who has found her prey. She devours my neck while I begin to cum.

I enjoy this, but I have to tell her something. “Ail.”

She mutters, “yessssss,” and grips my wrists tighter.

“You have to fuck me!” I command.

“I am fucking you,” she insists, terribly perplexed.

I sigh. “No, I want you to ride me.” She blows hot air into my right ear. My toes tickle and electricity bounces off my spine.

A quizzical smile appears. With dallying eyes, she inquires, “How hard would you like to be ridden?”

I bite my bottom lip, squint my eyes and say: “I want you to ride me until...”

I pause.

I release her hands from my wrists, breaking her hold over me. I turn around to face her, I say: “I don’t believe you are capable of satisfying my cravings.”

I move in closer to her right ear. I lick her ear lobe and start sucking it. I scrape it with my teeth. My left-hand cups her right tit and my right-hand clutches her left ass cheek.

“Xio, I’ve been fucking for years. There is nothing I can’t do,” she brags. She is confident in her abilities, but I remain skeptical.

I have my right hand wrapped around her neck.

“Kneel,” I instruct her.

Her body lowers. The vigor in her eyes shrinks. I squat to meet her and bite her bottom lip in search of iron.

As I lick and chew on her lips. I move my hand from her neck to her hair. I yank her hair back and say: “Thank you, darling, that was scrumptious!” She smiles with her eyes and licks her lips. I know there’s no blood left because I sucked it out of her.

I guide her to the floor. I blow hot air all over her neck. I drop wet kisses over her breast and taunt her nipples with my tongue.

She moans. My stomach growls out of hunger for her.

I suck them softly, swiftly with teeth and hands squeezing. I suck her all over, making my way to her hips.

“Are you dedicated? Treat my pussy right,” she murmurs, incoherently.”

Disgusted by her boldness, I stop. I reach for her neck and claw into her skin with my nails. Once she opens her eyes, I say: “Dr. Cullen, if you are not humming or cumming, silence will suffice.”

She laughs.

I dig deeper into her skin, and briskly assert: “I am going to fuck you into ecstasy! I am going to take my time. There will be intermissions. And I will return with a greater appetite. You will be amazed by the pleasures of your pussy. If you utter another word, I will gag you.” With a smile, I rhetorically ask, “Capiche?”

My tongue dances between her thighs in harmony with the cadence of her pounding heart. I leisurely arrive at her pussy.

I lick the letters: D R. C U L L E N, on her clit. I repeat it backward. Her hips are convulsing. I feel the rumblings of a volcano under my tongue. I nibble and suck and savor the delicious flavors.

Compelled to tease her, I utter: “Will you ride me?”

She slaps the floor in response. Her back is arched, neck bent, I can only see the tip of her chin under the dim lighting—a splendid sight to behold.

As I finger fuck her, a puissant flood of cum juices flows out of her pussy and into the palm of my hands.

I marinate her in her own juices. She is my greatest craving.

Dr. Cullen bakes in ecstasy as I worship her body with my eyes.

She reaches for my hand. I kiss her left cheek, “Hun, you’re not done yet. We’ve got some cooking to do. This is an intermission.”

She utters, “How hard?”

I lean into her left ear and whisper, “Until I’m bucking like bitch.”

* * * * *

The sun burned me in my bed. Otherwise, I would still be dreaming. This was no ordinary dream:

I see the color yellow, then red, then brown. Fuck! The fucking sun is glaring in my eyes. I hear a knocking. I scream, “I’m awake!” and get up and open the door.

“Oh my God, are you okay?” Mia asks.

“Yes, Mia. I’m FUCKING grand!” I grunt.

I have crust in my eyes. A gray ripped shirt, holes in the underarms and it doesn’t pass my belly button. I have no bra on and turquoise grandma underwear. My hair is uncombed and has collected particles from my bedding. I look like a madwoman!

“What’s wrong,” she asks sympathetically and invites herself to sit on my bed.

Under my breath I mumble, “Bu...cking”

“What! Xio, what are you saying? Dude, wake up!”

Mia is a funny girl. I don’t really know her that well. We have very personal conversations but we never hang out. I know she’s in my room but I am loyal to my rage.

I yell, “To buck! To be rode! by her;” as I climb on my bed.

I am hugging myself like a straightjacket. In a daze, I jump all over my room. Between leaping from wall to bookshelf, I accidentally run into my closet door, eyebrow first.

Mia moves towards the door, ensuring a quick exit.

In pain, I make my way to the ground. I sprawl out over the mess of clothes and old term papers. I am hitting the floor and throwing everything my hands find.

Mia vigilantly witnesses the disintegration of my mind.

I yell louder, “Buck... Bucking... Like a bitch,” as I pull my hair and kick the air.

* * * * *

Reality summons my return. I call Dana.

Ring, ring.

She answers, “What’s up Xio?”

“I’m dying!” I cry.

“HAHA, you have the most absurd stories. What do you have for me today?”

“I want her so badly”

Dana asks, “Who?”

“Her name is Dr. Cullen. She is driving me crazy!”

“What’s the holdup? You usually go after what you want...”

“She’s some Director here at Smith. I don’t even know if she likes me. Plus, I think she’s really into guys.”

“Ok. Xio, I need you to listen carefully: She’s not a professor. She is a staff person. Therefore, she can fuck and buck whomever she so desires. As for her liking you, you tend to go for people who like you twice as much as you like them. And last I recall, your longest relationship was with a “straight” woman. Just go for it, dude!”

“I really want to. She is fucking the shit out of me in my dreams. Dude, I wake up with a sore pussy at least three times a week. That’s a healthy sex life...if only she knew.” I laugh hysterically and turn my gaze to the T.V.

“Xio, Let’s back up. Why are you attracted to her?”

“She is unlike any woman or person I have ever met. She is hilarious. Fucking smart! Not just an academic, she’s an intellectual. Oh, and she got a phatty! Hey girl, hey!” We laugh.

“I know how you like them, white girls, with asses. It’s like ya fetish. Nah, scratch that. Blasian women are your fetish.” She cracks up.

“Ha-ha. Ha-ha, NOT funny, Dana! I was saying... it’s her energy. From the first day, I saw her I was glued. I couldn’t peel my eyes off her.

“Mmhmm...”

“Dana, I’m serious. I can’t explain it. I can feel her.”

“Oh shit. Xio’s sprung!” she hollers.

“No. It’s not even that. I’m not in love with her. It’s not a crush, either. I just want her. I want to be around her. I want to know her. I’m not looking for love. I’m not even looking for a relationship or a fuck buddy. This woman is *exquisite*. I know I may be young, but in my nineteen years of living, I have never met someone as intriguing, dynamic, or just comfortable in herself.”

“O.K, let’s do some fantasy shit. If you could tell...what’s her name?”

“Dana your memory sucks ass! It’s Dr. Cullen.”

“Doctor, huh?”

Her voice regresses to that of a high-pitched school girl:
“Stethoscope on the clitoris, Pleezzzz Dr. Cullen,” I laugh and interrupt her.

“You were talking hypotheticals...”

“Yeah, yeah okay. If you could tell Dr. Cullen how you felt, what would you say?”

“It would go something like: ‘Ail, You seep into my mind when silence settles. I wish to know you better. I don’t care how or when...’ I imagine she would stare stupidly, so I would say, ‘I don’t know what I hope to accomplish, but I find the truth, my truth, to be my saving grace. And I would hope if you met someone who moved you, the way you

move me or felt someone's essence." I break to think. "As though it were tangible, as I feel yours, I hope you would be brave enough to impart that to them." I exhale deeply.

"Uh, Xio, this is not *Days of our Lives*, cut the soap opera shit!" We laugh.

"Hater, Dana." I tease.

"How do you think she would react?"

"Not a fucking clue. I haven't even thought about it... I'd like to think that her Ph.D. in Human Sexuality would work in my favor..."

Dana laughs, "She gotta Ph.D. in *sexuality*? Shit man...I need to be at Smith. She must know how to make pussies sing *Amazing Grace*!"

"Mmhmm, Dana. I can't see her thinking I'm crazy. You like people, you know? It happens! Sometimes, something becomes of it, others, not.

"Yeah," Dana agrees.

"It's a high-stakes gamble. I might jeopardize the rapport we've built."

"Xio, don't be a pussy! How important is revealing your truth?"

"Very!" I exclaim.

"Uh, so what's the hang-up?" Dana asks.

“It’s just...I’d be hurt if she thought I was a raving lunatic and told her boss or thought it was sexual harassment.”

“No way, that’d be hella OD!” she shouts.

“Xio, she studied human sexuality! She’s human and you want some sexual lessons. I trust she’d find humor in this innocent *student crush*,” Dana crackles.

“I don’t know. I really like dropping by her office. I have gotten used to sending her emails and Facebook messages that she doesn’t respond to. I enjoy knowing someone who is divine in her own right.”

“I’ve known you for four years now. In those years, you have lusted after maybe three dozen women, but you have never spoken so eloquently of any.”

“I know!” I cough. “But, Dana, how do you go about telling someone about this? I can’t go knock on her office and spill this shit. I can’t write her letters that would be on some psycho tip. I can’t ask her out on a date. I can’t do SHIT!”

“Well, has she taught before?”

“That’s an odd question. For several years, I think.”

“Bingo! Write something and have her edit it for you”

“Really, you think that would work? Hmm, the idea is catchy but sounds too easy.”

“Xio, it will, if you write something appropriate.”

“I hate that word!” Dana and I are different types of people. I get caught up in semantics; she gets caught up in...well, let’s just say, she’s caught up in life.

“What word?”

“*Appropriate!* It reminds me of words like *normal* and *equality*. Stupid fucking words! They perpetuate social disparities and make ignorance fatal, spiritually speaking. Never mind, I think I can write something.”

“Perfect! Let me know when you write that story.”

“Wish me luck!” I stretch my limbs.

“Hold up Xio, aren’t you seeing that six-foot chick?”

“You’re hell a late! That ended before finals.”

“You are too much! You see, I can hold onto my women. You gotta learn to love ‘em baby”

“Dana, don’t talk to me about love. You’re like Shane talking about buying a house and adopting children, before the reboot—it’s not in your script.” I laugh.

“Fuck you bitch!” she shouts over the phone.

“Missed your chance babe. Try again another life.” We both laugh.

I am flipping through the channels when someone knocks on my door. “Yo Dana, hold on for a sec.” I put her on mute.

“Who is it?” I shout.

“An unidentifiable voice says, “It’s Linda!”

“Come in,” I howl.

“Hey Xio, what are you up to?” I look out the window, in search of an answer.

“Not much. I’m just chatting on the phone. Why? Are you doing something tonight?”

“Yeah, me, Joan, Leslie, and Candice are going to this bar opening in Amherst. It’s the big thing this spring”

“What’s it called?” I ask.

“Dreamz.” My eyes widen.

“Linda. What did you say?” I ask again, as I lean over my bed.

“Dreamz, you’ve heard about it right?”

I freak. How is that possible? It was a fucking dream. My fragile hold on reality begins to shatter.

I take Dana off hold: “Dana, let’s finish this another time. I think my aorta is going to burst momentarily, but thanks for listening!”

“Take it easy, Mah. Some dreams come true!”

THE END

